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A

WARNING TO WIVES:

OR,

THE PLATONIC LOVER.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"COUSIN GEOFFREY," "THE MARRYING MAN,"
"THE MATCH-MAKER," "THE JILT," "THE BREACH OF
PROMISE," AND "THE LIFE OF A BEAUTY."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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CHAPTER I.

AFTER the restoration of their darling, all things went on apparently much as usual with Sir Noah and Lady Fathom ; we say apparently, because “the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy.”

Sir Noah rose from his bed (to which his sprain had confined him for some weeks) an altered man, but the alteration was one of those silent, inward changes, often undreamt of, even by those who sit by our sides, or lie in our bosoms.

Grumbleby had raised a spirit in the hitherto quiet, pre-occupied breast of old Sir Noah, a spirit it is much easier to raise than to lay—

the spirit of jealousy ! And Lady Fathom, still languid and weak from the anguish she had endured, connecting the restoration of her darling with her cousin's devotion, and seeing that cousin daily look sadder and paler, had admitted into her hitherto joyous, thoughtless heart, an interest which as yet was chiefly pity, but of that pity which the adage says is akin to love.

These were two unsuspected, but terrible changes in the hearts of this oddly matched, but hitherto happy couple. Terrible, because they were changes, neither would for the world have owned to the other ; and directly in married life, either party becomes anxious for secrecy, conscience should arouse to candour.

Poor Sir Noah's state was a very peculiar one ; not only was he naturally the most credulous and unsuspecting of men, but all his habits both of thought and conduct were so entirely scientific—fits of mental abstraction were so common to him, that he often forgot for hours together, the new and inconvenient passion,

which whenever it occurred to him, had all the horrors of novelty, from having been for a time so totally forgotten.

As there was not a particle of unkindness or tyranny in poor Sir Noah's nature, he never thought of shewing any resentment to Ada, or any coldness to her cousin, far less of desiring any cessation of his visits, or diminution of their intimacy. All he thought was of making himself more companionable, more fascinating, more what Grumbleby had assured him, the elderly husband of a beautiful young wife ought to be. To do this, he was obliged to break through the habits, and sacrifice the tastes and pursuits of a life; but with the best intentions, they were not so easily relinquished, and often when Sir Noah went to his dressing-room, and summoned Stubbs to assist him to modernise himself a little, to escort her ladyship, some book would lead him into a protracted reverie, from which he did not awaken till Lady Fathom and her cavaliers, Fitzopal and the major, with Fanny

and the Count Von Flitter, were gone to some scene of gaiety.

Not that Lady Fathom had, after the recovery of her darling, and her own consequent restoration to health and peace, returned with her first zest to the gaieties of the season. The anguish she had endured had left a physical languor, and a slight tinge of melancholy, which added, if possible, to her beauty and her fascination. The season too was drawing to a close, but the opera still had charms for Ada ; and poor Fanny found such delight in every little dance, fête, or pic-nic, with which despairing mammas and desperate daughters tried to protract the season, and their own chances, that Ada had not the heart to refuse her chaperonage to Fanny, on any of these occasions. Lady Revel had not returned to the Fathoms' during the interval of illness and distress which succeeded the abduction of the little Noah,—she had made other arrangements for passing her time more agreeably, and contented herself with an occasional short

note of enthusiastic affection and passionate condolence to her beloved Ada, and a frequent cold, cutting, rousing epistle to dear Fanny, of which the burden always was her own maternal merits, sacrifices, and disappointments, and the indignation and contempt she should feel for Fanny, if she did not tread in her sister's steps, make a sensible *mariage de convenances*, and before any exposé took place at Revel-court, become Mrs. Grumbleby, with an income very nearly equal to that of Sir Noah.

Poor Fanny! all these letters just now were particularly distasteful to her; Fanny envied not Ada's wealth, and she loathed the very thought of Grumbleby, whom, in addition to all other drawbacks, she discovered to be a very conceited old fellow, himself looking out for a wife with a fortune, and therefore of course quite unattainable. Fanny was only sixteen, she knew she had a thousand pounds left her by her godmother, and which sum was to be paid her on her marriage, or on her becoming of age.

She mentioned this trifling legacy to the Count Von Flitter, who by a very simple process of arithmetic, reduced it into florins, in which coin it cut a much more respectable figure. The young count *was* in love, and had made no progress at all with any of the "*fortunes immenses*," to whom Von Herz had presented him—Baron Von Herz, who was certainly rather a warning than an example to foreign wife-hunters, since he had been on the look-out for an English woman with a large fortune, from the time he was slender five-and-twenty, till now that

On his forehead middle-age
Had slightly pressed its signet sage,—

now that his thick light hair had worn a little away at the crown, in a circle like the tonsure of a monk,—now what was taken from the head seemed added to the whiskers and moustaches,—now that he looked rather jovial than sentimental, had a figure like George the Fourth in Lawrence's picture—had made countless offers, and

been even engaged twenty times, and was yet living in a second-floor, on a very small income, but with an immense circle of acquaintance, and working as hard for mere hopes, every night and all night long, at polkas, mazourkas, valzes à deux temps, cellariuses, and quadrilles—as railway men do by day, for excellent wages. Certainly, when the young Count Von Flitter considered this, and contrasted his cousin's wretched second-floor, and miserable income, with his ceaseless exertions and enormous expectations—when he saw him dancing so furiously, and till dawn, with any woman who was even reported rich, however old, ugly, or disagreeable, saw him at the beginning of every evening, so sanguine, with the one flower in his button-hole, and the new white gloves he could so ill afford, and beheld him the next morning, so dejected and depressed, Von Flitter determined not to tread in his cousin's steps; he knew that cousin might some ten or twelve years earlier, have married women, young, pretty, and love-

able, with tolerable fortunes ; but he was set upon "*une fortune énormé*," and in this odious and disappointing pursuit he had wasted his life. He had talents, and many kind and good qualities, but as he was always misled by the mean ambition of marrying an heiress, he never even attempted to turn his talents to account ; and as for his good qualities, except a sort of passive good nature, they were at last giving way under the idle and frivolous and irritating nature of the life he led. But no experience took any effect upon him ; like a gambler, even when he has lost his all, he was quite sure "the thing might be done," "was to be done," and if he could hold out long enough, "would be done ;" and he was so confident, that he led many others into the snares, and had actually lent, out of his very small resources, five hundred francs to his young cousin, the Count Von Flitter, to bring him to England, as a wife and a fortune-hunter !

Lady Fathom was so young and inexperienced

a chaperon, and her own attention was so much engrossed by the deep melancholy and invariable dejection, which Fitzopal (acting under Major Smiley's guidance) had assumed, that she did not perceive the devotion of the young Count Von Flitter, nor Fanny's encouragement of his attentions, until he one day called upon her, and formally requested her, in her character of elder sister and chaperon, to authorise his paying his addresses to Mademoiselle Fanny Revel, *sa trop charmante et trop aimable sœur!* Ada was quite taken by surprise, and informed the count that she was so, and would consult her sister on the subject; but that in any case, as Miss Revel's parents were both living, she must refer him to them, in short to Sir Wildair and Lady Revel. To this the young count replied in rapid, confident, and broken English, that he had already been so fortunate as to secure her affections, and the consent of *l'aimable Fanny*, who had told him "with a charming candour, that all the independence she possessed was one thousand

pounds sterling, left her by her godmother. "C'est a dire, Madame," he said, taking out his pocket-book, and rapidly doing a sum, "so many thousand florins. It is little—very little, I own; but I have two thousand florins a-year as attaché to the embassy of ———. We are young—we love—what wid my income and dat thousand pound—Oh miladi, much may be done wid thousand pound sterling. And den who can tell—you are rich, you have influence, you love your sister, you will love her choice, your new broder! n'est ce pas? Sir Wildair will consent, he will give something—some leetle ting, to a young couple who loves. Lady Revel, she is proud—dat is well—I like pride, I am proud—my moder is proud—Lady Revel, trough pride, may refuse before marriage, because I cannot give *l'aimable Fanny* a house like this—a carriage—que sais-je?—but when it is done, her pride will make dear maman assist—den will come in every day—present for Fanny and her dear son Albert. First, de trousseau—oh, I see

de jems sparkle!—de cashemire waves—de lace! oh beautiful! den de plate! you rich English have so much, and Fanny and Albert have none!—no, not one little fork and spoon between them—oh, dat cannot be! Pride make maman Revel send de forks, de spoons,—ah, perhaps de silver dishes, who can tell? Then come every day de good tings, de fat goose, de dear little tucking pig—de noble fowls—de fine liqueurs—and in de season, de games—de grand fruits—and papa add hamper of fine old wine for poor Albert! Oh, I see it all—my dear broder Noah too—and you, my sister, you will be only too good to de poor young couple dat marry for love. Ah, I tink we will not spend much of my little income, nor of Fanny's dear little thousand pound! Dat thousand pound go a great way—indeed!—You laugh!—ah, you do not know what it is to be in love wid one who has only thousand pound. It makes one tink, and tink, and tink—of many tings indeed!”

It was quite true that Ada at last could no

longer repress her laughter. It seemed to her as if the thousand pounds was brought a great deal too prominently forward in the lover's calculations,—and the rapid manner in which he ran in broken English, through his expectations from his papa Revel, and maman Revel, his brother Noah, and herself, his sister; the “gooze,” “the tucking pig,” and the hampers of wine, which figured in his imagination, already formed an aggregate of foreign frankness and impudence, coaxing and covetousness, which tickled Ada's fancy the more, because she did not believe Fanny had ever encouraged the count's pretensions, and because she knew how different would be the conduct of papa and maman Revel to anything the plausible and sanguine young Count had imagined or described.

Ada, however, after some fruitless efforts to recover her composure, at length succeeded in assuming sufficient gravity and self-possession to assure the count that she would make known to Miss Revel, the honour of his flattering proposals,

and that her sister would of course, unless she herself decided on declining them, refer him to Sir Wildair Revel.

Ada then politely bowed away the enamoured and expectant Von Flitter. She at once repaired to Fanny, and from her she learnt, with no small surprise, that the absurd proposal of the count was authorised by herself. Ada tried to laugh Fanny out of her predilection, by a whimsical description of the count's expectations,—the "tousand pound," "de gooze," "de tucking pig," with other good things to be supplied so abundantly by "papa and maman Revel."

But Fanny was only nettled at her sister's lively ridicule, not the least disenchanted. "I thought, Ada," she said, "in referring the count to you, I referred him to a friend who had my interests at heart!"

"And so you did, dearest," said Ada, moved by Fanny's tears; "but what can I do in this? If you really love this man, (an event I had not contemplated,) it is very little I can do to help

you. You must refer him to papa and mamma!"

"Oh yes! what good would that be, Ada! just listen,"—and she took out her mother's last letter—"listen to this one passage, and then see whether to refer to them would do any good, and whether, even if I did not love the count, which thank Heaven I do, I have much to choose from. After a good deal that I will not read, because it is the old story you know so well, of mamma's rare virtues and undeserved trials, she says,—‘ You seem to make no progress whatever with Mr. Grumbleby, a man so vain and so conceited that any girl of tact could bring him to her feet at once; this convinces me you have no power to please, and no skill to fascinate; you will therefore, of course, never marry, and as your father is meditating escaping to Paris, and I am not willing or able to maintain you, you must, under an assumed name, go out as a governess, companion, or teacher; but for your tactless obstinacy, you might have secured in

an union with Mr. Grumbleby, all the advantages your sister Ada enjoys as Lady Fathom ; but you are not only very inferior to her in personal attractions, but you have not one tithe of her discretion, docility, or good sense. If I do not hear very shortly that you have made some progress in Mr. Grumbleby's favour, I shall confide the whole state of our affairs to Miss Golightly, and get her to help me to place you out as a teacher in some remote country school. The establishment at Revel-court will be quite broken up in a few months, and you will have had the satisfaction, of filling to an overflow my cup of bitterness, and of adding the last finishing stroke to the disappointments and mortifications of your undeservedly wretched mother, JULIANA REVEL.'—Now, what do you think of that, Ada ?" said Fanny. "Can anything be more unjust, more absurd, more degrading ? I am not at all sure that even if I had laid myself out from the first to ensnare that old, spectacled bear, Grumbleby, and he had believed me dying

of love for him, that he would have dreamt of proposing to me. As he is such a vain, conceited, boasting, philosophizing old horror, I dare say he would have believed me in love, pitied me, and lectured me in his prosy way, on the necessity of subduing the imagination, and conquering the passions,—adducing himself, as he always does, as a splendid instance of both these triumphs. But even if I had been so false, so mean, so contemptible, as to pretend to love him, I do not believe mamma's object would have been gained. I am sure he, like the Baron Von Herz, expects to marry an heiress."

"Yes, I believe he does; he has, you know, a chance of the celebrated Indian heiress, Miss Castleton; her choice (owing to her eccentric father's will) is confined to her cousin Adolphus, our poor brother Wildair, and this conceited, pragmatical old Grumbleby. Now Adolphus spurns the thought of marrying for money, or indeed of marrying at all." "Wildair does not come forward, and if he did, poor fel-

low, it is very likely either that she would object to him after all these scrapes, or that he would reject her as positively as he did the living of Richdale ; so that unless she likes a single life, she has only old Grumbleby left ; and who can tell—he has been very, very conceited, preoccupied, and puffed up lately ? Have you not observed it, Fanny ?”

“ Oh yes, ever since the fancy ball, Ada ; even while we were in such trouble he could scarcely contain himself, and he has been so dressy and so scented lately—always going out with new primrose kid gloves, and a bouquet in his buttonhole—hinting things too, about the superiority of taste, judgment, and beauty, of a woman of seven-and-twenty, and a chit of sixteen ; supposing plans if he had a large capital uninvested, and constantly drawing pictures of his future life as a husband and a papa !”

“ Oh, it must mean something,” said Ada.
“ My own impression is, that he has found out this Indian heiress, got introduced to her, has

proposed, and been accepted. Indians are very odd, jealous, tetchy, and vindictive. Fitzopal will not come forward—Wildair cannot, if he would, (which is doubtful); so who can tell but what, in pique or revenge, she may have accepted Grumbleby? If she is seven-and-twenty, she may have had enough of a single life.”

“But she would have something, surely, if she were to marry any one else?”

“Yes, five hundred a year.”

“Five hundred a year! Oh that is quite a good fortune.”

“Not to one accustomed to as many thousands, and more.”

“Well, *nous verrons*, Fanny, I must write to papa about this count’s offer.”

“Oh you can do as you please—I mean to have him, and would rather live in poverty with him, than be a teacher in a school, or be Mrs. Grumbleby if I could. At any rate, Ada, you will not forsake me?”

“Forsake you, dearest! Oh no, but do think,

Fanny—this is a very poor, imprudent, silly match, for a girl with your beauty, and only sixteen !”

“Beauty, Ada! with red hair and these freckles?”

“Your hair is no longer red, the freckles do not disfigure you; you already rank as a beauty, and will appear in the next month’s ‘Spring Flowers’.”

“Well, if I am pretty, so much the better,—Albert will have some excuse. Ada, you must go to the ball at —— House to-night, I want to wear the new silver lama dress you gave me, and my pearl bandeau.”

“Very well, Fanny; but it must be the last ball this season; and indeed the day after to-morrow we all go to Brighton—so it must be the last.”

“It shall be the last, dearest!” said Fanny, embracing her sister. And the last it was, for that very night, and from that very ball, Fanny eloped with the young Count Von Flitter, and

not being able to afford post-horses, they escaped by railway to the Land o'cakes and brother Scots, were united at the romantic altar of Gretna,—perhaps the only couple of a certain rank who had ever travelled so far, the bridegroom to secure a bride with a thousand pounds; the bride a husband with sixty pounds a year! but in their case we must own—*money was not the main spring of their actions*—they loved. Albert magnified the “tousand pound,” and the probable advantages of the match, and Fanny preferred poverty with Albert to any other chance she could reckon on.

Nor did their daring, and as some thought mad adventure, injure them. Once done, Ada and Sir Noah received them with as much brotherly and sisterly love as the sanguine Albert could have pictured. Sir Wildair and Lady Revel of course refused to recognise them, but Sir Wildair was obliged to hand over the “tousand pound.”

They had a delightful home with the Fathoms for a time, and urged by Ada, whom he was now

excessively solicitous to please, Sir Noah exerted his interest to procure the young count a better appointment. In this he succeeded,—but it was one that compelled the young couple to live principally abroad. This they did not object to, after Ada and Sir Noah had promised to visit them.

We forgot to say that on the day on which he received the “tousand pound,” Count Von Flitter paid Baron Von Herz his five hundred francs !

CHAPTER II.

GASPAR SMILEY had been extremely uneasy in his mind for some time after the restoration of little Noah. It was quite evident that Marian Moore was acting under the guidance of some third party, for Gaspar could learn no tidings of her either at Margate or in her old home. Herself and her children had entirely disappeared, and Major Smiley, though he did not suspect Marian of any deliberate or malicious wish to injure him, was not at all secure of her discretion, nor at all reconciled to the idea that some low accomplice should be in possession of a secret so dangerous, it might be so fatal, to his honour,

and of which he might at any time avail himself, for purposes of intimidation and extortion.

Major Smiley thought it very probable that the whole party were at present reveling with the improvident profusion of the poor, in the sum they had received for the restoration of the child; but he knew how soon, with such people, the largest sums (which seem to them at first inexhaustible) are squandered, and he feared, when this was the case, he would soon be required to supply more, on pain of exposure. Added to the alarm with which he contemplated such a contingency, was one arising from an unpleasant and tormenting sense of perpetual *espionage*. He had suspected that he was the object of a vigilant watch even before the abduction of little Noah, but having then no particular reason to fear scrutiny, he had dismissed the notion as absurd and unfounded.

On the very night of his leaving little Noah with Marian, he had again a vague notion, that a man very meanly clad, and muffled up, dodged

him back to Sir Noah's house, and several times since, in different neighbourhoods, and different disguises, he had felt certain that the same person now crossed his path, now overtook him on his road, and more than once watched him from an opposite window.

Such an impression would fill any one with a vague discomfort and distrust (if not something more), and Major Smiley, although physically brave, had that on his conscience which made him shudder at the thought, that he was the object of so constant and so untiring a watch. It became so very irritating and tormenting to him at last, that he resolved, the next time he met this man, to accost him, tax him with his evident *surveillance*, and beg him at once to explain its object, or to desist from it on pain of being given in charge to the police.

About this time, Sir Noah Fathom, who was daily growing more and more odd and eccentric, more fond of his wife and less so of the Muses, determined to take Ada and her child to Brighton.

He had a sort of notion, that away from London she would be more entirely his own. He did not remember how easy it was for Fitzopai and Smiley to follow them to Brighton, nor indeed how much more conducive to intimacy are the rides, the drives, and the long mornings by the sea-side, than any of the noisy gaieties of London.

Ada, still languid, and alas ! far from happy, was glad of any change, and dwelt with delight on the prospect of seeing the roses freshen on little Noah's cheeks, and beholding his delight in playing on the beech with children of his own age, filling his little cart with stones, and riding races on donkeys. Nothing could have been more girlish and innocent than the young mother's delight in these pictures, and would we could add the fancy went no further ! but without one suspicion of the danger of such dreams, Ada, alas ! allowed herself to think of the vague and dreamy delight of sitting long hours by the lone sea-shore, listening to the

music of the waves, and that of Adolphus's low, deep voice. Yes, she pictured to herself delightful rambles before breakfast, watching the sun-rise, and inhaling that first fresh breeze of morn, which is such an elixir to the young,—of still and sunny noon, under the shadow of the cliffs,—of evening, rosy as her own hopes,—and moonlight, pure, and yet delusive as her own affections. But the companion of all these sweet visions was not him who alone had a right to gild her gladness, or to soothe her sorrow. She would have been startled had she been told that Sir Noah formed no part of these bright pictures. Has she forgotten that solemn vow, that “for-saking all others, she would keep her only to him, so long as they both should live?” But if a careful analysis of her own breast would startle her a little from her dangerous self-reliance, what would it be, could she read the heart of her cousin aright, corrupted as it is daily and hourly more and more by the heartless suggestions, the taunts, the jeers, the jibes, the innuendoes of the Calculator.

And she believes, in the innocence of her girl-
ish heart, that Major Smiley is the very worthi-
est and kindest of good men, and that Adolphus,
dear Adolphus, is the soul of honest truth, sen-
timent, and feeling. He may—alas ! she dares
not think he may, have one fault, fatal to his
own peace, and ruinous to his prospects—the
ambrosial sin of loving her too well,—

An unrequited tenderness,
Living on its own sweet excess ;

such as he has hinted he is the victim of, though
he presumed not to name the object.

And once, in words that awoke a thousand
echoes in her heart, and with eyes moist with
tears, he spoke of

A passion without hope or pleasure,
In his soul's darkness buried deep,
It lay like some ill-gotten treasure,
Some idol without shrine or name,
O'er which its pale-eyed vot'ries keep
Unhallow'd watch while others weep.

Adolphus Fitzopal, among his other dangerous fascinations, had a fine taste in poetry, and a wonderful memory. He quoted *à propos*, and in a manner which lent new charms even to the finest verse. It was a dangerous gift, because it allowed him to convey what in simple prose would have startled Ada out of her dangerous confidence in herself and others. Poor Ada ! so envied ! so admired ! so beloved ! and alas, already so maligned ! For of course, a thousand daughters with watchful eyes and jealous hearts did not sit beauless, partnerless, and neglected, while Ada entirely engrossed two men of fashion, without awaking feelings to which a thousand mothers, more indignant and more daring still, gave utterance, as their turbaned heads met, and their feathers quivered with wrath and spite. Coarse-minded men of the world too, were ready to put the worst construction on the disregard of appearances, which arose entirely from innocence and its attendant confidence. And Ada's heart would have withered with shame had she known

one tithe of the comments her cousin's attentions brought upon her. But as is usual with the false, the hollow, and expedient world, no word or look of warning was vouchsafed to the young wife. The world's coarse maxim, "that as long as the husband was satisfied, no one had a right to interfere," was applied to her by those who were proud of her acquaintance, because she was the fashion and lived in style, and who found it convenient to enjoy the *entrée* of her house, and the *éclat* of her presence at their parties. Yes, many were proud to know the beautiful Lady Fathom, while all went smoothly with her, though they believed within their hearts the time would come when it would be necessary to cut her. And oh, if ever that time did come, alas, poor Ada! how would they make thee pay for all the homage they offer thee now!

But Ada dreams not that one breath of slander has ever sullied her name, she has entire faith in the esteem, the regard, the ad-

miration professed for her,—faith as entire as in the goodness and truth of Major Smiley, and the honour and unselfish devotion of Adolphus! Alas! the idols that we raise, and at whose shrine we are so prone to worship, how pure they look in the glowing sunshine of our confidence, but once overthrown, what nests of vipers, what loathsome reptiles are disclosed to our view!

Alas! who that has ever uprooted an idol, has escaped the conviction, that however fair without, he was all corruption within!

CHAPTER III.

WE must now beg our readers to accompany us to the Hornet office, where Devereux Spight (too long neglected,) who has been obliged for some time past to play at hide and seek, is venting some of the venom with which his pen and his heart overflow.

Spight, on his return to London, lost no time in endeavouring to make himself very agreeable to the lovely heiress, who was just returned from Ramsgate, affianced (as we know) to the hitherto ill-starred Luckless. It is certain that at any time Inez would have considered the proposal of Spight as a piece of unparalleled impertinence,

both because she had known him formerly as a language master, and because she had never for one moment associated any idea of love with the sardonic little editor. Certainly, women are very unjust, capricious, and arbitrary in these matters—and Inez was not less so than the rest of her sex, for while she felt honoured and delighted by the devotion of Luckless, the ill-dressed, half-starved attic lodger, whom no one knew, and whom the Evergreens pronounced to be a disreputable pauper, she felt indignant and disgusted at any advances from Devereux Spight, whom she had known and corresponded with for so many years, and who was at least in apparent affluence, of considerable literary power and attainment, a pattern of newness and neatness in dress, and the idol of the Evergreens.

Neither Melpomene nor Thalia dared to acquaint Devereux Spight with the intimacy which in his absence had sprung up between the heiress and poor Luckless, and therefore when he found his advances coldly, and indeed

somewhat haughtily repelled—and when to a sarcastic insinuation he impertinently ventured, that Inez's affections were engaged, he received no assurance to the contrary, Spight felt sure Captain Fitzopal had made an impression on her heart, and his rage and venom knew no bounds.

He was excessively disappointed and annoyed to find that the captain had not yet secured in Miss Evergreen, her whom he believed to be the heiress—and he trembled, lest, before the marriage took place, the *ruse* might be discovered and the captain free. Added to all these annoyances, things were not going on as well as heretofore with the Hornet, and Devereux Spight was sitting in the worst of ill-humours at his desk, in his dingy and disreputable office, venting his spleen as follows, in the hopes of exciting a commotion which would compel the captain to give up Lady Fathom's society, and carry off Miss Evergreen. And thus with great rapidity and venom wrote the malignant little editor:—

“It is whispered among the circles of the West-end, that a certain geological Baronet, who does not live a hundred miles from Belgrave-square, will at his demise bequeath to the geological society, the skeleton of a *horned ass*.” “Capital!” said Spight, after writing so far, stopping to rub his white and delicate hands,—

“neat and cutting and quite new; every one will see the point—and yet there’s nothing actionable. Now on Sunday morning, every fair of May-fair, will drink that in with her coffee, and every loungeer discuss it with his devilled biscuits and grilled bones. Come, I must proceed—I’m in the vein, I find—here goes:—“This learned Baronet is so devoted to science abroad, he is obliged to provide a substitute in the home department; a gallant in the hussars, who has seen much service—in the ball-room, and stood fire often—from the eyes of beauty, has accepted the office, vacant by the Baronet’s constant absence, *pro tempore, en attendant* an engagement for life in the service of a certain

heiress, possessed of countless charms. It is rumoured, however, that the daughter of India and of Cræsus, is more willing to be wooed than won, and is leading the poor captain a wild-goose chase into the slough of despond."

"That'll do—that'll nettle him! That will bring matters to a point. First it will sting Sir Noah to madness—fire up my lady, who has no idea the captain is courting the heiress. It will pique the saucy Inez, and set her against Fitzopal, frighten him into proposing to old Evergreen to elope—and ruin the cursed popin-jay captain—besides perhaps accelerating matters between Grumbleby and Thalia." At this moment, a miserable little printer's devil came in, ragged, ink-stained, but with sharp eyes, and a premature intelligence on his projecting forehead and underhung chin.

"Sir, is the leader ready?"

"Yes, boy," snarled Spight, handing it to him.

"Sir," said the boy, with a knowing wink,

"a great big military gentlemen have been here enquiring for you."

"Well?"

"I said you were out, sir."

"Why so, boy?"

"Sir, he'd got a great horsewhip with him."

"And what of that?"

"Oh nothing, sir, only when I saw it, I told him you were gone on the continent."

"Very well, you may go."

"Oh, sir, I forgot to say, Mr. McPeevish has been here—he wanted very particularly to see you, sir—he seemed to be in a bad way—crying, I think. He said he'd call again."

"Shew him in when he comes."

"Yes, sir." (Exit boy.)

"Now," thought Spight, "I think McPeevish might be of some use in accelerating matters between Fitzopal and Melpomene, Grumbleby and Thalia, myself and the heiress. It ought to be sufficient inducement to him to oblige me, and to get rid of that curse of the wretched

fag end of his existence, Thalia Evergreen ; but if he did help me to the heiress, I'd do something more for him. Talk of the devil ! that's him, I'm sure,—I know his fretful knock." At this moment, in came McPeevish, and alas ! for the pride of manhood—in tears !

"Well, Spight," he sobbed, "you'll hardly believe it—Flint and Steel have returned my MS., after keeping it six months—Isn't it too bad ?"

"Why, I don't know—what do they offer ?"

"Oh," sobbed McPeevish, bursting out into a fresh flood of grief, "the cursed old story—half profits !"

"McPeevish !" said Spight, "would you like to be revenged on them ?"

"Yes, confound them !" sobbed Peevish.

"Then take my advice—accept their offer !"

"Pshaw ! Spight, what good will that do ?"

"Why, revenge you ; they're sure to lose by it."

“Lose ! Lose by it ?” said McPeevish, wildly pushing back his hair, his eyes flashing, and violently excited. “Lose by my new geological novel,—‘*The Loves of the Dinotherium and the Megatherium* !’ a subject so startlingly, so strikingly new ! Fancy, Spight ! fancy the gorgeous scenery of a half created world ! the boiling oceans of fusing, hissing, red-hot granite—the giant groves—the untrodden tracts. They’d make thousands by it ! and after six months’ suspense, they offered me half profits !”

By this time poor McPeevish was fairly sobbing. “Spight,” he exclaimed, “I really don’t know what to do—you know I gave up a very profitable business to devote myself to literature, by your advice ; by your advice, I embarked almost all my capital in the ‘Boudoir of Beauty,’—a dead failure. Every work I have written has been a loss to me. The Evergreens grow very cool, and evidently expect their money, so long overdue ; I do believe I shall have to marry that odious Thalia, to avoid a

prison, and to secure a home. Oh, what a fool I have been ! why, why did nature curse me with an unavailing genius ; and why did you tempt me into the thorny fields of literature ? I am a ruined wretch !”

“No, no,” said Spight, “not quite, I am your friend.”

“Then prove such, and get Cant and Underhand to buy the copyright of ‘The Loves.’”

“I’ll see what can be done ; but you must do me and yourself a service. Lend me your aid in the little plot I’m carrying on for the innocent pleasure of a little mischief, to secure a pretty wife with five hundred a year, to get rid of a tormenting old maid, (a dun for both love and money,) and to make a fool of the most conceited, impertinent coxcomb in the world—a beau, an amateur poet, and, in short, a perfect pest !”

“I’m sure I’ll gladly help you to get rid of Melpomene, if you will do me a similar service with Thalia.”

"Then I can indeed oblige you,—that is, if you've head for a rather complicated plot."

"I think, Spight," said McPeevish, "if you'd read that MS., you wouldn't doubt my head."

"Well then, McPeevish, you know that to get rid of old Evergreen, and to pay the Captain a grudge I owe him, I have persuaded him that our dear little Indian heiress has assumed the name and the guise of Miss Evergreen, to try her lover's merits, and the power of her unaided charms."

"Yes, I know all that."

"Well, you know too, perhaps, that Fitzopal, over head and ears in debt, and full of the idea that old Evergreen is indeed the heiress, has proposed to her, and is under an engagement to elope with her. This, as he hates the sight of her, and is desperately in love with Lady Fathom, he has put off to the last moment. My own opinion is, that he has found some Jew to advance him a little money on the strength of his

engagement ; if so, his time is almost up, for three months will of course bring him to the end of his tether. All this time, Inez McAlpine, alias Clementina Castleton, watches the whole affair, and disgusted both with the cupidity of the captain, and the non-appearance of Wildair Revel, will become Mrs. Devereux Spight, for she can never think of Grumbleby ; and indeed, I have begun to play off the same trick with him and Thalia. I am so busy, and am obliged just now to be so much away, that both the Evergreens want a little help to bring matters to a rapid conclusion. Do you play into my hands, and you will be rid at once of Thalia's dunning and devotion ; you will secure my favour if you get old Evergreen off with the captain ; and directly I'm married to the heiress, though with only five hundred a year, I'll pension you off, or put you on the Hornet ; and I'll at once use my influence with Cant and Underhand about ' The Loves. ' ”

“ My dearest Spight ! it is a bargain ; but

won't Grumbleby think that Thalia looks deuced old to be the young Indian heiress?"

"Pshaw, McPeevish, where's your invention? you a novelist indeed!—give a hint, as I did about ill-health, and India. But fear nothing, old Grumbleby, wisdom ever on his lip, but folly at his heart,—why any woman could take him in, but a shewy, plump baggage of forty, with rouge and ringlets *à la Ninon*, an heiress as he fancies, worth half a million, she'll seem Venus herself to the old spectacled bear."

"Oh, capital! capital, Spight; what fun to see the Evergreens return as brides! I've no doubt they'll be a perfect bower of orange-blossoms; ha, ha, ha! and it will be a comfort to have them provided for!"

"Yes, I daresay no one would give me credit for it, but owing to some early kindness shewn me by Mad. Evergreen, and a sense of the "auld lang syne," and a sort of pity for two friendless, half-cracked, improvident, and kind-hearted women, who have worked so hard, and to so little

purpose ; the getting them provided for has had a good deal to do with my engaging in this plot."

"But all this while, Spight, where's the third suitor, Wildair Revel,—is there no fear of his turning up?"

"No, no, I believe he's safe enough—in jail I fancy, from lending his name to some knavish friend,—some bill transaction ; I believe he's at Boulogne ; but were he not, there's not much fear of him—he's a total fool, McPeevish ; not at all the sort of man to make his way with a vain, exacting coquette—and every woman is that at heart. He's an upright, downright fellow, who scorns to appear better than he is—and would not feign a passion he did not feel, to be a millionaire so provided. Why, he's in all this trouble—imprisoned, disgraced, half-starved, and losing this glorious chance with Clementina Castleton, because he's fool, ass, dolt, and Don Quixote enough to refuse a good fat living in his father's gift, and by accepting which, he

would recover his father's favour, and get all his debts paid !”

“ Oh, he must indeed be half-witted ! but on what plea does he decline it ?”

“ Ah, there's the best of it ! on the plea that he's not good enough—has no vocation for the ministry—that he can't take the wages of the shepherd, unless he can make up his mind to devote his life to the sheep ! ha, ha, ha ! Then he actually won't let his sister know where he is, lest his troubles should fret her, and make Sir Noah assist him again. Oh, no, no, there's no fear 'of him.”

“ No, I see that,” said Peevish ; “ but come Spight, let's go to the Evergreens.”

CHAPTER IV.

It was a lovely day in the glorious summer prime, and nowhere did it seem more fragrant, more delicious, than among the stately trees, the vernal vistas, and on the velvet sod of Kensington-gardens. How refreshing, how delightful, after the dust, the din, the glare and the scorching flag-stones of London, to find oneself in

Those green retreats,
At once the monarch's and the muses' seats.

But the season was over, and no gaudy crowds vulgarized the stately scene—a few lovers flitted among the dark and distant groves, a few sulky nursery maids congregated together in the most

public walk, dragging along their crying and unwilling charges. Here and there some unhappy one, sought solitude and shade,—but London's thousands and tens of thousands did not avail themselves of this enchanting promenade, because the season was over, the band did not play, and it was not the thing to proclaim oneself still in those haunts which Ton had deserted and Fashion forsworn. Yet to this lonely spot came, sad, dejected and out of humour, the darling of Ton and the favourite of Fashion, Captain Fitzopal.

The Fathoms were gone to Brighton,—and though Fitzopal had half decided on following them, and Lady Fathom had artlessly urged his doing so, Fitzopal could not but remark that Sir Noah (generally so very hospitable) did not invite him. Grumbleby had gone so far as to tell him, that it would be base and encroaching in him to go. He was lamentably short of money,—his bills to the money-lenders were fast becoming due, Major Smiley was more than ever sar-

castic and tormenting about his want of success with Ada,—and the dire necessity of promptly securing the heiress, was a perpetual night-mare to his spirit.

Thus tormented on all sides, Captain Fitzopai roamed into Kensington-gardens—to think !—and thought might perhaps have done him some good ; but just as solitude and nature were beginning to exercise a softening influence on a heart not naturally bad, Major Smiley, who had dreaded such a result, and had therefore followed him, appeared by his side, his evil genius !

“ And so,” said the Major, taking his arm, “ you did not go to Brighton with the Fathoms ?”

● “ No ! how could I ? I was not invited.”

“ But surely, Fitz, a hint to little Ada would have been enough ?”

Fitzopai winced ; he really loved his cousin, and therefore he hated to hear her spoken thus lightly of. Nettled at Smiley’s tone, he said,

“Once for all, Smiley, I request you will always speak of Lady Fathom with the respect due to my cousin, and——”

“Oh, of course! my dear Fitz; indeed I only did it to try you. You’re such a deep dog, I wanted to find out how matters stood. I see she’s still the unattainable—what a difference that makes! By George! Fitz, if the women did but know what idols they seem to us before we win them, and what bores they become after, vanity would save thousands, that virtue cannot protect!—but you seem out of spirits.”

“Oh, I am so confoundedly bored; and now I perceive a plebeian and antediluvian jealousy springing up in the breast of old Sir Noah, and sown there no doubt by my egotistical, meddling, philosophising old uncle. It will increase all my difficulties ten-fold, Smiley, for Ada is very fond of the old fossil remains of an ass, and would not cause him any uneasiness for the world; then I’m so confoundedly short of cash—I don’t see how I can go to Brighton. Had

the Fathoms invited me, it would have been different."

"My dear fellow, why didn't you tell me this before! I've just sent off to a poor friend in distress, a fifty that would have been quite at your service."

"Oh, thank you, Smiley, I never thought of asking you—I know you're always out of pocket, lending to some poor devil or other."

He only knew it from Smiley's own false assertions.

"But," said Smiley, "I am going to my old home, or rather my uncle's old home, in the neighbourhood of Brighton—I have never been there since my uncle's death—indeed till lately it was let furnished. It is an old, lonely, secluded, rambling sort of place, near the sea; but for your present object it would be the very thing, and quite good enough as a marine retreat, for two fellows, *montés en garçon* as we shall be. It's so lonely, so ghastly, and so haunted by memories of my old uncle and my unfortunate

brother, that your company would be a great comfort to me there. We can discuss at our ease your prospects and affairs, both pecuniary and sentimental. I dare say the old place is sadly out of repair, but I remember the stabling is excellent; and if you have tact and resolution to get your lovely cousin to pay you a visit *à la dérobé*, we'll soon fit up a drawing-room and a boudoir to her taste. I say *we*, though of course in such a case I should keep quite out of sight. Come, what say you? shall I drive you down next week—and see if you can work upon your cousin's pity, love or fears, before your bills are due, and you must elope with your heiress!"

"Well, Smiley, since you are so kind, I think I'll say yes at once. She must see how much I love her, and how miserable she's made me; and if she only means to trifle with me, she deserves we should outwit her. I'll see once more what I have to hope from her pity and her tenderness, and if I find they are broken reeds, you shall help me to concert some scheme that shall bring

her on the wings of terror—a sham suicide, or a pretended death-bed. We shall have time enough to plan that.”

“ Yes, and if she still plays the tyrant, I’ll slip in, as if by accident ; she’ll thus think herself fatally compromised, and her reputation at any rate in our power ; and as a woman’s virtue never survives her reputation, we’ll bring her to reason. She’ll keep her own secret, and we’ll keep it for her,—you’ll go off contented with your heiress. Secure her, and then if you still care for your pretty cousin, she’ll of course be glad to see you on any terms, and if you weary of her—why I’ll console her ; all this, of course, quite *entre nous*,—and every precaution taken to secure Sir Noah’s peace, and the lady’s fair renown ; but trust her for that,—she is very careless about appearances now, because I do believe, partly from accident, partly from a native simplicity and purity of thought, she’s as yet,

Chaste as the icicle on Dian’s temple.

But when once she has anything to conceal, like all the rest of them, she'll prove cunning enough. Let it be our care to draw out her natural talents. You mustn't mind a few tears, reproaches, blushes,—they'll soon wear off; at present

She is, what others are content to seem.

But in a little while she will be content to *seem*, and seem all the better, the worse she becomes.

Oh vile and detestable plotter against the purity and peace of a soul! Oh that women, tottering on the dread abyss beneath which rolls (whether perceptible or not) the black sea of infamy and perdition, could hear thus lightly discussed and contemptuously reviewed, the horrible sacrifice they have half persuaded themselves has a something sublime in this its self-immolating devotion! There were indeed a “warning” few wives would forget.

“Well, that point's settled, then; I drive you down to Brighton, Fitz, next Monday—and if

we set our heads together, trust me for the result. By-the-bye, look, Fitz, isn't that, that pretty Spanish girl you nearly ran over? if so, do let's go and speak to her—it'll cheer us up. Come, you really must flirt a little, if only to keep your name up, and your hand in—several of 'ours' have asked me what is coming to Fitzopal—you're losing your title of the Buonaparte of the boudoir. Look, here she comes, and a pretty little soubrette with her. Now come, she's a mere nobody, do let's have a little fun."

Thus urged, Captain Fitzopal approached Inez, who not liking his familiar smile, nor the expression of his companion's face, would fain have bowed slightly and passed on; but this our dandies, would not allow.

Captain Fitzopal took the pretty brunette's unwilling hand, and said, "My friend, Major Smiley, covets an introduction so much, that I am compelled to be old-fashioned enough to introduce him."

Inez bowed very haughtily, in return to a

rather off-hand, half-military salute of the major's, and endeavoured to move on.

"Why in such a hurry, lovely Miss McAlpine?" said the captain; "do avail yourself of this seat, and let us have a little chat. Major Smiley and I were just talking of your rosy lips and starry eyes."

"I think," said Inez, who could no longer resist her inclination to laugh, though she felt much provoked, "an engaged man might have found a better theme!"

"Engaged! sweet Inez? why what has such a mere *mariage de convenances* as you know mine will be, to do with my ardent admiration of the very prettiest person in the world? besides, I mean no harm, do I, major? My regard for you is quite Platonic—isn't it major? a regular Platonic attachment."

"Platonic, indeed, — I believe Pluto has more to do with your attachments than Plato," laughed Inez.

"Bravo!" said the major; "Captain Fitzopal, you owe her one."

"Miss McAlpine setting up for a wit!" sneered Fitzopal, not knowing what to say.

"Oh, I can set myself up, and you down, if I choose!" said Inez.

"I dare say you can do anything you choose," said Major Smiley, impertinently. "I am sure you can with me,—only let me look into your eyes. Do you know you've deuced fine eyes?"

"You have indeed," said Fitzopal, "the finest eyes in the world."

"Oh, fie!" said Inez, taking no notice whatever of Smiley, who was fifty times more odious to her than Fitzopal, "you should think no eyes fine but hers."

"Hers?"

"Yes, Miss Evergreen's,—lighted by genius, and softened by love."

"Pshaw!" said the major, "you know all about that, of course you're in the secret; but the fact is, my dear girl, we're both of us deuced hard up,—two poor devils who cannot afford to remain single, or to marry for love; we're both

in the matrimonial market, and we're both put up to the highest bidders."

"Then," said Inez, rising, "I sincerely hope you'll both very shortly be knocked down. Come, Rose!" So saying, Inez took her leave, so decidedly, and her last retort was so great a puzzler, that the captain and the major having nothing to say by way of repartee, remained, looking very silly and quite outwitted.

They had thought to lounge away half an hour pleasantly, in talking impertinent nonsense to a pretty girl whom they considered a mere nobody—a sort of person who must put up with their impertinent admiration and rude jokes. But even in her assumed character, Inez was able to defend herself—hers was indeed,

The sweet-briery fence,
Which awes the touch while winning the sense ;

and though she rather blamed herself for condescending to joke with two insolent strangers, she was a little proud of having defeated them

with their own weapons. After sitting a little while, staring at each other, the captain and the major agreed that it would be capital fun, when they had time, to humble that little, impertinent puss,—and that they must see about it; and then Fitzopal catching a distant view of his uncle Grumbleby, with a lady on his arm, our beaux effected their retreat as rapidly as possible, but only just in time, for they were scarcely out of sight, when Grumbleby, absurdly dressed, his white hat stuck jauntily on one side, and excessively inflated with his imaginary success, appeared, Thalia Evergreen leaning on his arm, and tripping gaily and girlishly along.

Thalia's hair was dressed *à la Ninon*, and a gipsy straw hat, surrounded with a wreath of wild roses, and tied with green ribbon, was perched on her cork screw ringlets of radiant carrot; a white skirt, and a scanty green sarsnet polka, completed her attire. "Dear me!" she said, "where can Inez and our attendant Rose be? I thought I should certainly find them here.

Alas ! what will the world say, seeing me alone with—a—man ?”

“ Well, what of that ?” said Grumbleby, pressing her arm and peering through his spectacles under her gipsy hat,—“ you must live alone with a man when you’re married, mustn’t you ? eh, my dear ?”

Thalia trembled, “ Married !” she inwardly ejaculated. “ Oh, dear, delightful word ! how different to McPeevish, who never even alluded to such an event.” While thus soliloquising, Thalia had gently returned the pressure of Grumbleby’s arm, and looked up into his face with a die-away expression ; but suddenly becoming playful, she exclaimed,—“ Oh, you naughty man you, to put such thoughts into girls’ heads.”

“ Put such thoughts, my dear !” said Grumbleby, catching hold of her plump fingers, “ you know, from fifteen to fifty, the girls think of nothing else. Now, tell me candidly, wouldn’t you like to be married ?”

"Oh!" sighed Thalia, "it is such a startling question, put in that direct way—I don't know what to say! You make me blush!"

"Nonsense! I ask a plain question, and I expect a plain answer."

"Well then, I should like to have some noble, daring, brave man, to protect me—to guide, direct, advise me. I am only a silly girl—I should like some one to cling to, to revere, to love! to worship, to obey!"

"She really is a fine, enthusiastic creature, though somewhat stout and matronly for seven-and-twenty; but what eyes! what teeth! what hair! what sentiments! A woman fully impressed with man's immense superiority before marriage, must become doubly so afterwards—and to think that in reality she's worth half a million! How she sighs and looks down, presses my arm and trembles!—I shall cut out Fathom finely now! Lady Fathom hadn't a penny, and yet she gives herself all the airs, and has all the ruinous notions of a town-bred heiress, and here's

a girl—a fine woman, though in a different style—with half a million, and who'll yet be as meek, fond, and obedient as a country curate's seventh daughter. But it all rests with the man. Fathom's a fool—a total fool—but I'm none. I'll strike while the iron's hot. "My dear," he said, "you're a girl of sense, and your sentiments do you honour. I'm much mistaken if we're not kindred spirits; at any rate, one thing is pretty clear,—you like me, and I like you,—why shouldn't we marry? eh?" Grumbleby took her hand, she did not withdraw it, but smiling archly in his face, exclaimed,—

"Oh, fascination! who could say you nay?—To think," she inwardly added, "that after all, instead of McPeevish, with nothing, I shall get this love with five thousand a-year!"

"Well then, listen, have you a daring spirit?—are you romantic? if so, let us elope together."

"No one," he added, *solto voce*, "gets a woman with half a million, but by a *coup de maître*."

"Elope!" said Thalia, "and why? we are of age!"

“ Yes, but people meddle so, and my nephew will be putting some spoke in the wheel; then all one’s friends, *alias* foes, expect expensive fêtes, and gloves, and favours, and bride-cake. I am an orphan, and more than of age, but I’m a catch-match you see, and there’ll be plenty of envious mothers and jealous daughters, eager, if possible, to do you out of me. See, see, here comes Miss McAlpine back again,—what a beautiful girl she is! I’m not sure (quite *entre nous*) that she hasn’t an eye to me, pretty soul.”

“ Pretty! La, do you admire her so much—that dark style, and so *petite*?”

“ I admire beauty in every shape, whether as the trembling satellite or the resplendent harvest moon. It’s my weak point. Ah, you’d better make sure of me.”

“ Well, come on! Inez and Rose have not seen us yet. Let us plunge into these thickets.”

“ Yes,” said Grumbleby, looking back after Inez,—“ my dear, what a sad fellow I am; but it’s a weakness, I share with most philosophers,

poets, and heroes. Here, when I've just won such a prize as you, to think I can't help looking after that little gipsy."

"La! you make me quite uncomfortable,—I've a great mind not to have you."

"Oh, once yours, I shall be yours for life. I must go out of town to-night on business; but promise to elope with me this day fortnight, and I'll swear not to give a look or a thought to any other woman, so long as we both do live."

"Alas! my yielding soul! my beating heart! I am yours."

"Well, you're quite right; I shan't be quite safe till I'm married—the sooner I'm tied up the better, so come along! I'll see you home in a hackney coach—we can settle all preliminaries as we go along! I was never so happy in my life."

"Nor I," sighed Thalia. "Oh dear, domestic bliss!"

CHAPTER V.

SIR NOAH and Lady Fathom spent a quiet and delightful week at Brighton. Sir Noah, no longer tormented by his old friend Grumbleby, and his new foe, jealousy, returned naturally and unconsciously to his old hobby. And Ada, to whom the sea was a novelty, and whose darling was beginning to run alone, and to lisp his love, found it a delightful pastime to sit by the sea-side with little Noah, Janet, and "the last new novel."

There was still so much of the girl about the young mother, that she entered with a real de-

light into the amusements Janet provided for her little charge. Donkey-rides, shell and seaweed hunting, and an occasional row when the water was still, these, with the delights of bathing, and the amusement of watching the motley groups, (principally from the East,) caused the time to glide by on downy and noiseless wings. Certainly Ada did often wish her cousin would come, to double all these pleasures; but in that wish, the handsome Adolphus would have been mortified to find there was no feverish impatience, no restless yet pleasing pain,—many symptoms of affection and regard, but none of the passion he had hoped to inspire. No, if Fitzopal and his detestable adviser are ever to prosper in their odious plot for the downfall of this innocent and delightful creature, it will be, alas! through her virtues they will work her ruin. The affections are generally the strongest in those natures where the passions are weak; and this is a character not at all rare among the daughters of Albion, and one, of which :

Ada offered one of the most enchanting and endearing types. She may, alas! be led into those ruinous follies and imprudences which the world always attributes to corrupt and guilty passions, selfish and sensual; but if she is, it will be through her child-like confidence, her angelic tenderness, her sympathy, her faith. Like Rousseau's Julie, she in such a case might say,—

J'aurai résisté à l'amour,
La pitié m'a perdu.

But not like her, could she ever fall, consenting to that fall. Pity may lead her into the snares, may endanger her reputation, blight her prospects, ruin her existence; but not destroy her virtue—if it is into the power of a being with one human feeling, that her pity and her tenderness shall throw her; but should they throw her into the resolute and remorseless hands of the calculator, what may her fate be then! and

it is towards such a result Gaspar Smiley is now bending all the energies of a nature, the direct antetype of poor Ada's, a nature where affection, tenderness, compunction, pity have no part ; but where passion, selfish, sensual, and ardent, reigns supreme, and is for the first time roused to its fullest height.

Gaspar Smiley's plan, then, is to use Fitzopai, and his love for his cousin, merely as a sort of decoy. After long and deliberate calculations, he has decided that Ada can never be his (Gaspar's) without a crime on his part, or by her own consent. Bad as his opinion of women is, in his inward heart he pays her the involuntary tribute of believing, that though she may compromise herself, to comfort or to save her cousin, whom he believes she loves, she will never be led into real error, even for him. What hope then could there be for Smiley, whom she does not love ?

No—it were a waste of time, of opportunity,

of energy. Major Smiley's plan, then, is to get Ada once to visit her cousin at his house, he taking good care to keep concealed. Thrown off her guard by the respect with which she is treated, and the impunity which attends this dangerous visit; she shall go a second time, as she believes, to save him from self-destruction; but Gaspar Smiley will have so managed, that Fitzopal shall either be arrested before that visit, or shall have eloped with Miss Evergreen; having trusted to Major Smiley, to deter Ada from fulfilling her engagement. And thus, Ada, venturing alone, and unprotected, to Major Smiley's secluded and romantic abode, with no intention but the amiable and womanly one of saving a soul, shall fall into the snares of the remorseless Calculator—and live or die, a blasted, blighted thing, a warning to all wives, of the dangers of self-reliance, and the ruin of encouraging any interest, or taking any step unsanctioned by the advice and support of him, of whose

honour and whose peace she is the guardian, and who is entitled to her fullest confidence in every case that can endanger her fame and her purity, which are his own.

CHAPTER VI.

JANET was in high spirits, for Lady Fathom had promised her to allow her to have her own darling boy on a visit to her; and poor Janet, seeing the delight of little Noah, in his donkey rides, his rows, his excursions, and his games with his little playfellows on the beach, and noting the delightful accession of health, strength, spirit, and beauty, caused by the bracing air of Brighton, and the life he led, looked forward with rapture to the delight of seeing the same effect produced on her own even finer and handsomer boy.

Poor Janet! in the incessant occupation of watching little Noah, and playing with him in the open air, in the novelty and excitement of the scenes around her, and in the natural buoyancy of youth, she had lost for a time that bitter sense of self-reproach, that morbid regret for the past and haunting dread of the future, which in her gloomy London lodging, and her ill-paid toil had robbed her beauty of all its bloom, and her manners of all their wild and playful *naïveté*. In their different styles, Lady Fathom and her young nursery governess were the perfection of loveliness; and often, unconsciously to themselves, their beauty was as great a source of interest and attention, as the coming in of the Dieppe steamer, or the arrival of Lord W.'s yacht.

Lady Fathom, with her long gold ringlets, her large, rich, blue eyes, her roseate bloom, and her patrician air, was an admirable specimen of first-rate English beauty among the higher orders; her dress too was always costly, tasteful, and modish; and the extreme youth of her soft face formed

a curious contrast with a form whose rounded and stately grace might have served a Juno. Janet, on the contrary, with her Grecian features, her large black eyes, her snow-drop complexion, and flaxen hair, braided in waves, her very simple dress, and the tartan scarf she always wore, was the beau ideal of a Scotch lassie, such as Walter Scott would have sung and Frederick Taylor delighted to pourtray. Lady Fathom was by far the most brilliant and beautiful, but to the taste of some, Janet was of the more rare and poetical style.

Lady Fathom knew she was a beauty, and took an innocent pride in showing off her charms ; Janet, early blighted, felt no glory whatever in the face and form which had caused her downfall. All pride in herself was quite passed away, to centre with tenfold power in the beautiful boy of whom she was as proud and as fond as if he had not been the living witness of her shame and the perpetual memorial of her frailty. Janet would never have dreamt for a moment of the possibility

of any comparison between herself and Lady Fathom; she looked upon Ada as the perfection of womanly loveliness and feminine virtue, upon herself as an outcast, blighted in person and blasted in fame, indebted for her present position to a deception she dared not expose or deny; but she shrank from no comparison between her little inheritor of sin and shame, poverty and contumely, and the son and heir of the wealthy Sir Noah Fathom, born to wealth, luxury, the world's esteem, and all the goods of life. Her own boy *was* taller, stouter, more precocious (the children of the poor generally are); and lovely as little Noah was, Janet's unhappy child was a more stately, striking looking boy; his flaxen hair, in a profusion of spiral curls, fell on his broad, full chest, and his large black eyes, ruby mouth, so like his mother's, gave a softness to a face, in the regular and rather cold features of which there would otherwise have been the expression of his odious father. Poor Janet! since the amiable and considerate proposal of Lady

Fathom she had stolen nightly many hours from her rest, to prepare him a wardrobe, in which he would not only satisfy her maternal pride, but be fit to associate and play with the young heir of Strata Park and Fathom Hall. Stores of play-things the young mother had amassed, and ardently did she long for the appointed day when she was to set out in search of her only treasure, and bring him back with her to Brighton.

With regard to Major Smiley, Janet was now quite disenchanted, and though for her own sake she ardently wished for an event which seemed daily more and more unlikely, namely, that by marrying her, he would give her child a sort of respectability in the eyes of the world, and herself in that child's, yet, had it not been for her boy, she would have shrunk from an union with one who had shewn himself towards her, so cold, so inconstant, and so heartless.

Of late, Major Smiley had availed himself but little of the opportunity he had so adroitly

created, of learning from Janet the sentiments and the movements of Lady Fathom. Indeed, though he intended to make Janet useful in the grand winding up of his detestable plot, yet, in his own base heart and scheming head, he had so well matured his design, that he resolved to encumber himself as little as possible with any agents, however unconscious; having almost always found that his schemes succeeded in proportion to their secrecy being kept to his own bosom.

It was then on a scene of quiet and innocent enjoyment, that Major Smiley and Captain Fitz-opal prepared to intrude. Sir Noah, who had met at Brighton with two or three old cronies, (fellows of the Antiquarian and Geological Societies) had forgotten, in his ardent return to his favourite pursuits, all his fears and all his jealousies. Ada, at first a little spoilt by the perpetual excitement of fashionable life in London, and the homage paid to a beauty *à la mode*, had just recovered her natural delight in tranquil enjoy-

ments, maternal pleasures, and intellectual pursuits; and Janet had only another week, of which to count the hours, before she should be allowed to go and fetch the pride and darling of her life. It was one day while Sir Noah and two old cronies were gone fossil-hunting, some miles off, and Ada, seated on the beach, watched the sun set, and the waves ripple and break upon the beach, while little Noah filled his cart with stones, and Janet helped him to pile them up, thinking the while that in a week her own darling would shout with the same joy, and breathe the same invigorating breeze, that two elegant military-looking fashionables, after attracting the eyes of all Brighton, found out Ada's retreat; and raising her eyes from her book, Ada, with a blush and a slight start, rose to welcome Major Smiley and Captain Fitzopal.

CHAPTER VII.

It was a very disagreeable surprise to poor Sir Noah, when after a fatiguing and unsatisfactory excursion, (with his two old geological cronies,) he returned, expecting to spend a quiet evening *tête à tête* with his darling Ada, he found Major Smiley and Fitzopal in the drawing-room, and heard that Lady Fathom was dressing for dinner.

Adolphus Fitzopal had already made a most tasteful and fashionable toilet, and reclining at his ease on an ottoman, was accompanying his exquisite voice with Ada's guitar, and looking extremely handsome, provokingly self-satisfied,

and quite at home. He had thrown the scarlet ribbon of the lute *à la troubadour* across his shoulders, a large brilliant sparkled on the little finger of his white and taper hand, a rare and beautiful geranium adorned his button-hole, and the air around him was ambrosial with some new and exquisite perfume. His foot, of which he was justly proud, (justly at least in his frivolous character of an exquisite,) was the very perfection of a foot, and shod to the greatest possible advantage in a black lace stocking, and a shoe in the construction of which Le Hogue seemed to have surpassed himself. The ottoman on which Fitzopal reclined, was placed opposite a large pier-glass, and Sir Noah, as the captain half rose to shake hands with him, unintentionally looking into the mirror, was most forcibly and disagreeably surprised by the contrast their two persons presented ; old, bent, wrinkled, dusty, high-shouldered, and ill-drest, Sir Noah for the first time in his life felt ashamed of his homely person and his age, and a sharp pang of

envy shot through his heart as he contrasted the auburn wig, beneath which several white tufts of hair protruded, with the sleek and fragrant locks of the young hussar; his guest's large black eyes, and oval Narcissus-like face, with his own high cheek-bones, blue spectacles, weather-beaten skin, and the scars which still remained from his accident with Vanderhümbuggers, then too study had given him a habit of stooping, and what is commonly called a hog-back. His dusty morning coat of shepherd's plaid hung on him [like a sack, coarse brown tan gloves covered his hands, and thick dusty shoes disfigured his feet. Poor old Sir Noah turned mortified from the glass—a choking sensation rose in his throat, tears, which his spectacles concealed, filled his eyes—and after a hurried welcome to Fitzopal and the major, who just then came in from the balcony, also *en grande tenue*, and looking to great advantage, Sir Noah murmured something about dressing for dinner, and scuffled away at full speed. On the stairs he met his

young and blooming wife, dressed to the greatest possible advantage, leading her cherub boy by the hand, and singing in the gladness of her heart. She was in the highest beauty and the highest spirits; the evening sun fell full on her beautiful golden ringlets, her Hebe face, and the snowy arms and bosom, which for the first time in his life, Sir Noah felt vexed to see uncovered. She wore a double dress of Indian muslin, worked in gold, and a gold cord and tassels marked her slender waist; some very pretty heaths were mixed in her beautiful hair, a portrait of Sir Noah appended to a gold chain of exquisite workmanship adorned her neck, and a miniature bracelet of her darling boy set off her fine arm. Sir Noah was standing on the landing, and wiping away a very suspicious looking mist from his spectacles, when he heard her dear, sweet voice, and looking up, beheld her hastening towards him. Her coral lips were parted with a smile of so much gladness, and her sloping blue eyes harmonised so well with their joy, that Sir

Noah inwardly murmured,—“She has not looked thus since we left town !”

“What’s the matter, dearest ?” said Ada, looking eagerly up into his face, as he stood, vainly trying to speak,—his heart was too full !

“Are you ill,—are you tired, darling ?” she cried, putting her bare and lovely arm through his, all dusty as he was. “Oh, I see you are quite knocked up ; these long excursions with those stupid old professors, are too much for you. Make haste and dress, dearest, you’ll be better after dinner. Oh, you’ll be glad to hear Adolphus and Major Smiley are come—so now you’ll have all your time to yourself.”

Sir Noah groaned assent.

“You must change your dress, love !” said Ada, “I cannot excuse you to-day. Kiss our darling, that will refresh you ;” and stooping down, Ada lifted her beautiful boy, who was looking very lovely in his blue velvet tunic and lace collar, to his father’s face. Sir Noah caught him in his arms, and kissed him vehemently

but being unshorn, and much agitated, both the kiss and the hug were painful to the delicate boy, who set up the loud angry cry children always have recourse to, when hurt or offended.

“No wonder—no wonder!” groaned Sir Noah, “I am old and ugly. I frighten him.”

Ada, who was hushing the boy in her bosom, did not heed those sad and bitter words, but coaxingly said to the child,—“There, don’t cry, mamma’s own pet, come and see cousin Dolphy,—come, Noe loves his own cousin!” and adding, “Do be quick, Sir Noah, for it’s very late,” she hurried away, carrying little Noah in her arms. Ada did not perceive, that during this little incident, while stooping down to soothe her child, her chain had become unclasped, and Sir Noah’s likeness had fallen on the landing. It was a likeness which had been done some twenty years before; but owing to the style of dress, or the artist’s disdain of flattery, it looked full as old as Sir Noah did at the present time. It

was a large gold locket of an oval shape. At the back it was composed partly of blue enamel, and partly of a medallion, surrounded by pearls, in which a lock of hair of Sir Noah's, partly sandy and partly grey, was arranged like a prince's feather, and intertwined with gold cord. As it lay on the landing, in the full light of the bright evening sun, the likeness was very striking, and the form and features were certainly far from poetical or prepossessing; but Ada, who really loved the kind, indulgent, amiable husband, who had never caused her a pang, or denied her a pleasure, who had changed her position from that of the victimised daughter of a heartless mother, and the oppressed pupil of an exacting, imperious governess, to that of the most petted of ladies of fashion,—Ada, we say, who really loved Sir Noah, always wore this portrait hidden in her bosom, and would rather have resigned all her ornaments—her envied diamonds, her rubies, and her sapphires, than this old-fashioned miniature.

Sir Noah was not aware of this fact, for Ada was not what the French so cleverly call *démonstrative*, she made no parade of her affections, no profession of her sentiments ; engaged in soothing her boy, and amusing her guests, Ada had not missed her treasure.

It caught Sir Noah's eye, as it lay on the landing, in the full glare of the sunshine ; he contrasted it, stiff, hard-featured, high-shouldered, prim and powdered as it was, with the youthful beauty of Adolphus Fitzopal, and the surpassing loveliness of his young wife. The first passionate emotion which had disturbed his quiet life, distorted his features.

In a moment of jealous rage, he extended his large foot, thickly shod with hob-nailed shoes, and stamping on the fragile trinket with a kind of venomous trample, he shivered it to atoms—and ground together in one mass, gold, pearls, ivory, crystal, enamel, and hair. He then hurried, as if pursued, into his dressing-room, locked the door, threw himself on the sofa, and alas !

for science, when opposed to human passion—alas ! for the pride of manhood, and sixty years of sober sense—for the first time in his life, Sir Noah sobbed aloud.

It was at least an hour before the tempest in his soul was succeeded by a calm—and then he felt bitterly ashamed of what he had done, he resolved to go and pick up and secrete the fragments of the miniature, which he had left on the stairs, and resolved to encourage in Ada a belief that she had lost the trinket. He had hastened up stairs, intending to summon Stubbs, and make an elaborate toilet ; but as he looked in the glass, and beheld his features, swollen and disfigured by his recent emotions, he altered his mind, and hastily dressing himself for dinner, he went to his door, to ascertain that no one was in the way to prevent his clearing up the evidences of his folly and madness. “Ada is too well amused,” he said to himself, “to remark my absence ;” and opening the door, he stood face to face with Ada, who at that moment was about

to knock. She held the fragments of the picture in her hands, and was weeping over them,—“Oh Noah ! Noah !” she cried, “look here !”

Sir Noah looked,—her ardent grief was balm to his wounded spirit.

“No matter, dear Ada,” he said,—“an ugly portrait of an ugly old fellow.”

“An excellent likeness of an excellent husband !” sobbed Ada.

“Why, you did not value it, surely, did you, my girl ?” said Sir Noah, joy dancing over his drooping heart, and pouring out of his swollen eyes.

“Not value it, Noah !” said Ada, looking up with a frank and candid amazement in her beautiful eyes, that tempted Sir Noah to snatch her to his heart. “Not value it ! Did you not know I always wore it in my bosom—that I would rather have lost every costly gem you have lavished on me, than have had this even injured ? Not value it !”

And again she wept.

“My sweet, sweet wife!” said Sir Noah, “forgive me. I saw it on the floor, and as I contrasted its hideous features and uncouth form, with your own exquisite beauty, and a face and figure more worthy of your own, I yielded to I know not what inward demon, and crushed it in the dust ; but oh ! my Ada, the mad agony of that moment is more, far more than atoned for by this enchanting proof that you can look beneath the worn and rugged surface, into a heart where your sweet young image is enshrined. Come, darling ! Let us think no more of this folly. Where is little Noah ?”

“He is in the drawing-room, playing on the carpet, with Adolphus and Major Smiley.”

Sir Noah sighed ; but Ada took his arm and led him so playfully and fondly down stairs, that he forgot his sorrows, and the dinner passed off gaily enough. Still Ada could not quite obey his request, that she should think no more of the strange scene she had witnessed,—the recollection of her husband’s agitation, and the proof

she had received of the undreamt-of violence of his feelings, would recur to her mind, awakening a mixture of wonder, tenderness, and pity.

Every now and then, Ada, as she thought of the passionate proof he had given of love for her, self-disparagement, and alas! she feared, jealousy, sought his eyes with tears in her own. And several times in the course of the evening, she continued to touch his hand, and to whisper a kind word in his ear. Simple, affectionate, and placable, these unwonted attentions restored him to more than his usual happiness. And before slumber closed his eyes, he promised Ada another portrait, as much like the last as possible, of those features, from which he had turned with such mortification and disgust, but which would never have awakened any discontent in his heart, if he had not feared they might by contrast with her cousin's, make him distasteful to hers.

Doubt, distrust, and suspicion were, however, so naturally alien to old Sir Noah's nature, that this paroxysm over, (and which, but for Grumbleby's mischievous though well-meant suggestions, he would never have known,) he endeavoured to atone by all possible confidence, affection, and hospitality, to both Ada and Fitzopal, for the wrong he had done them; and even Major Smiley, as Fitzopal's friend, was included in a pressing invitation to make Sir Noah's house his home while at Brighton; but this tempting offer did not suit the schemes of the Calculator, nor the base designs of either of these dangerous men. And Ada heard them with surprise, (a little mingled with pique,) decidedly, but gratefully, decline an invitation, which her woman-instinct told her would have secured to both, the society they most coveted on earth.

However, while declining Sir Noah's offer, they invited themselves to breakfast the next

day ; and Sir Noah having an engagement of a scientific nature with his old cronies, they spent a delightful day with Ada, Janet, and little Noah, by the wild sea-shore.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME days passed on, in a succession of sea-side excursions, pic-nics, rides, and drives. The weather was delightful, and all seemed calmly happy,—calm as the blue sea before them was Major Smiley's cold blue eye, and Adolphus's half-mournful smile,—and deep and treacherous and dangerous was the calm of all !

Major Smiley had again been annoyed by the *espionage* of the ill-dressed, mysterious, and evidently disguised tormentor, who had so persecuted him in London, and he had always met with him at times when to demand an explanation of his *surveillance* was impossible. On one

occasion, when he attended Ada to church, he had scarcely risen, with an audible response, from his bended knees, before, from an opposite free-seat, he met the gaze of this man, who, in spite of the heat, was so muffled up as to be thoroughly disguised to any other eyes. He looked for him as they left church, but he was gone. Once, too, when sailing on a sea as smooth as a lake, he looked from the vessel, where he sate by Lady Fathom, and among the little crowd, watching the party from the pier-head, he detected the lynx eyes of this ruffianly looking man. Again, one night, that fevered and excited with the plan he was concocting, he could not sleep, his eyes wandered from the table where he was writing, to a window which looked upon the beech, and there he distinctly saw, peering in upon him, the face of the spy.

He rose, much agitated, but before he could reach the window, and open it, all traces of his tormentor had vanished. To such a man as

Gaspar Smiley, this sort of watch upon his actions was intolerable,—and yet he had no means of putting a stop to it, or even of investigating its object.

Meanwhile the time the usurers had granted to Adolphus was drawing to a close, and though Major Smiley was confident in his assurances, that his interest with the Jews would avail to get the bills renewed, Adolphus knew enough of the nature of these men, and of accepted bills in general, to feel extremely nervous on the subject.

He urged Major Smiley to hasten the completion of his scheme, that Ada might be his before he was either arrested or compelled to elope with the heiress ; but the major had his own reasons for biding his time, and for misleading Fitzopal with false hopes of the lenience of Messrs. Solomons and Levi. One day, that Sir Noah was engaged with his friends (the professors), Ada rode out on horseback, attended by Fitzopal and the major. Ada was in high beauty, which

beauty her riding-dress set off to the greatest advantage—her long gold ringlets softened the effect of the hat, generally so unbecoming—a black blond veil too gave a something feminine to the head-dress, and a delicate lace chemisette, with little blue silk handkerchief, made her close-fitting, dark riding-habit, the most graceful of costumes, when combined with her little buckskin gauntlets, a bouquet in her bosom, and the most coquettish little whip in the world.

For the first time, Ada rode unattended by her groom,—James having that morning asked for, and obtained a holiday. As they rode through the town, and along the crowded Steyn and Parade, the men all gazed at Ada with admiration, the women with envy, and every female tongue was busy with censure and slander, even of those who had most obsequiously courted, by the most cordial bow, the notice of the “Beauty of Brighton.” Pleased at the evident admiration she excited, Ada cantered along in the gayest spirits, and it was not till they had ridden two or

three miles, that looking suddenly at Fitzopal, who had been for some time silent, she perceived he was pale and dejected, and that his eyes were full of tears.

"What is the matter, dearest cousin?" asked Ada, almost tenderly.

"Nothing, Ada! nothing," he replied; "at least, nothing you can either pity or understand."

"Why not?" asked Ada, growing pale, for she felt she ought not to ask that question.

"Stop! Lady Fathom," said Major Smiley, riding up; "your horse has a stone in its foot; wait a minute, you must dismount, and I will remove it; he will be quite lame."

Ada allowed the major to help her to alight, and while he pretended to remove the stone, she sat down on the bank by the shore. Adolphus sprang from his horse, and came to her; he had worked himself up into a resolution to dare all, and to tell her of his love and his misery; had she blushed, trembled, or looked down, he would

have thrown his bold arm round her waist, and insulted her ear with the story of his passion, but he was not proof against the chaste candour of the smile with which she motioned him to sit by her, and said,—“Adolphus, tell me your grief, if it is one you think I ought to listen to, and to sympathize with; and if not, for my sake as well your own, determine to conquer it, dear cousin! You know how unprotected I am,—Sir Noah so engrossed by science, my brother so lost to me; be you a brother, then, till he returns, and tell me your sorrows, if they are such as you would tell your sister!”

Nothing Ada could have said would so completely have disarmed Fitzopal, as these few confiding and appealing words. He made no answer, and to cover his evident embarrassment, Ada asked him to whom belonged the quaint old place she saw a little way off.

“That,” said Major Smiley, gaily, as he approached to help her to mount, “is my marine

villa, Lady Fathom ; we will, if you please, take a glance at it, as we canter past it."

"How desolate it looks !" said Ada.

"It is the abode of desolation !" murmured Adolphus.

A few minutes brought them in view of the lone, bleak house, whose windows dropping a kind of green slime, seemed to weep.

"My horse goes very lame, major," said Ada; "I was nearly off."

"He is very lame indeed, Lady Fathom," said Major Smiley, appearing much alarmed ; "that flint must have cut his foot. It is very dangerous to proceed ! how lucky we are within a few steps of my house ! you must honour it with your presence, I believe, while we ascertain the amount of this injury."

Without a suspicion or a thought of harm, but yet with a reluctance for which she could scarcely account, but feared to urge, lest it should seem like prudery, Ada entered the abode, which,

so dilapidated without, was gay and cheerful enough within; and while Major Smiley went to consult his groom, Ada and her cousin remained *tête-à-tête* in the drawing-room, which she little suspected had been fitted up solely with a view to her visit.

But opportunity avails nothing if welcome only to one, and purity is a shield for woman against the attempts of the most profligate of men. There she sat, the object of his ardent passion, alone, defenceless, unconscious, but so majestic in her innocence and purity, that Fitzopal dared not hazard a word or a look which should bring a blush to her cheeks, a frown to her brow, or a throb to her heart. An invisible, but impassable barrier seemed to rise around her, and as she smiled and talked, and removing her hat, arranged her beautiful hair, and was as sportive and as easy as if in her own drawing-room, Adolphus ground his teeth and bit his lips, and unable any longer to endure

the impatient agony of his spirit, he suddenly left the room.

He hurried into the garden, where he was soon joined by Smiley.

"You have left her alone?" said the major.

"Yes, I could not stand it! Gaspar, I am a fool, that girl awes me! I have not dared, not even here, where there is not a soul to protect her, and where she is quite in my power,—I have not dared even to tell her of my love!"

"But you know, Fitz, it would be madness to tell her now; for if you did, she in all probability would never come again. The object is, so to behave to her to-day, that when you send to her, to receive your last farewell, your dying speech and confession, she may come in secret, but of her own accord; that is the step which is to put her in your power; and having so compromised herself in the eyes of the world, be sure she will be very glad to hush it up and

make the best of it. I know women well, Fitz, and that I can promise you, on the faith of my experience; so let us be all respect and reverence,—let the boudoir to-day be the shrine of which she is the saint, next time it will be yours to make it the bower of which she is to be the Venus. But say, did I not manage admirably, first in putting up the groom to asking for a holiday, and next in slipping a flint inside the horse's foot, instead of taking one out? I knocked it in so hard, Joe has been all this time getting it out. Come, cheer up man, everything prospers! all is *couleur de rose*, success is certain; but a faint heart never won a fair lady. A little collation and a great deal of respectful homage, an hour's chat and a quiet canter home, will leave an impression on my lady's mind, which will destroy any prudish scruples about visiting you here. Go to her, dear Fitz, and consider the battle more than half fought, the prize more than half won. I am going to order the luncheon, and will join you directly."

“Fool! love-sick, cowardly, compunctious fool!” he said, looking after the handsome Fitzopal, as he went dejectedly away; “he would be frightened out of his prize by the girl herself, even if I were not resolved he should never possess the jewel of the world, which I have now vowed to wear in my own bosom.”

CHAPTER IX.

SIR NOAH had been more than two hours at home, and waiting dinner, before Ada and her cavaliers returned ; and during these two hours the post had brought him a letter from Grumbleby, calculated to renew all his anxieties, and rekindle all his jealousy of Fitzopal, and distrust of himself. Grumbleby, elated with his conquest of (as he believed) an heiress of eight-and-twenty, (instead of a penniless spinster of forty) was lavish of praises of himself and censure of Sir Noah Fathom. He told him candidly, that he was a blind, rash, and imprudent fool, to expose his gay and pretty wife to the fascinations of a hand-

some young officer, whose principles of honour in such matters were of the *French* school. He owned that he had no opinion whatever of his nephew Adolphus, or his bosom friend Major Smiley, and that if, when he, Grumbleby, brought home a lovely young bride, his nephew dared to pay her any attentions of any kind, he would at once forbid him his house. "In your case," he added, I should not hesitate a moment; you married a girl without a penny—you bestowed on her not only yourself, but fortune, position, rank—you made her mother of your heir, and in return for all these honours and favours, you let her make you a mere cypher in your own house, and allow her to devote the time and talents which ought to be consecrated entirely to you, to the entertainment of a couple of idle coxcombs, who would think it a triumph to dishonour you both. Prevention is better than cure, Fathom, and before any greater harm comes of all this than the tittle-tattle it has already given rise to in the world, and the saucy spirit it

has encouraged in Lady Fathom, astound her and her beaux by a proof that you are master in your own house, and very quietly order your butler to deny both their lady and yourself whenever they call. Expect, and prepare for, tears, reproaches, and perhaps a swoon or two; but the more of these you have to contend with, the more sure you will be of the wisdom of my counsels, and the imperative necessity of adopting them. Ah, Fathom! if I had not a very important part to play in town, post haste I would come and help you 'to rule a wife, and have a wife.' I would show you how to get rid of these idle loungers, who, generally merry fellows, who can twang a lute and troll a ditty, caper and twirl, flatter, ogle, and sigh, make women discontented with good, sensible, straightforward husbands in the prime of life, like ourselves, Fathom; sneer at marital authority, and woman's subjection and obedience, and bring a curse wherever the master of a house is fool enough to admit them. However, ere long, 'as example is better than precept,'

I may be able to put you in the way of managing matters better than I can ever do by counsels, however wise. I suppose, if you saw a man of your own age, implicitly obeyed and passionately adored by a beautiful young heiress—who would have no eyes, ears, thoughts or talents but for her lord and master, and who would be enraptured with him and him alone, you would not think it so very hard to exact as much from a penniless beauty, whom you have surrounded with every luxury, and made the mother of your heir?"

There was a good deal more in this strain, and absurd, tyrannical, and egotistical as Sir Noah felt his old friend to be, he could not shake off a most painful feeling of jealousy, alarm, and self-humiliation at the perusal of this letter. He never for one moment dreamt of acting upon its harsh, pompous, and overbearing counsels. No, he must owe Ada's affection, her prudence, and her confidence, to her own tenderness and sense of duty, not to any restraint of

his. He felt degraded at the thought of controlling like a tyrant, one whose comfort, liberty, and happiness, it was such joy to him to promote. He threw Grumbleby's letter into the fire, but he could not get rid of the painful visions it had conjured up. Ada's long absence from him, her home, and her darling, tended to increase them ; and when she did return, having asked the captain and the major to stay to dinner, she hastily ran up into her dressing-room, without accounting for her delay ; her real object being, by dressing with all possible speed, to atone as much as possible to her husband for her involuntary want of punctuality. But, in some frames of mind, "trifles light as air are confirmations strong as proofs of Holy Writ ;" and Ada's neglecting to go and embrace Sir Noah as usual, and give him a little account of her excursion, added tenfold to the gloomy anguish of his jealous heart. Indeed, so silent, so reserved, and so unlike himself was he during the half-hour Ada spent at her toilet, that Fitzopai

and Smiley felt certain that he was suffering from the acu-punctuation of jealousy; and Adolphus, at a hint from Major Smiley, sauntered into the ante-room, to intercept Ada on her way to Sir Noah, and earnestly advised her not to mention the accident which had compelled her to take refuge in Smiley's house.—“I will tell you later, dear cousin, why I wish this,” said Adolphus. And Ada, though she hated reserve and deceit, was so much influenced by Fitzopal's earnest manner, that she bowed assent. A fatal mistake, and which perhaps she would have recognised as such, had she seen the triumph which lighted Fitzopal's face at this concession, and the significant glance with which he conveyed this important result to the major, who had suggested the manœuvre. He knew full well how difficult it is for a wife to acknowledge to her husband any event, however trifling or unimportant, of which, in the first instance, she has made a mystery; and he knew, too, the freemasonry that is established by the joint

partnership in a secret. Several times during dinner, Ada, in the frankness of her nature, was on the point of alluding to her horse's lameness, and her visit to Major Smiley's ; but perceiving Adolphus's anxious and half reproachful expression, she checked herself with a start and a blush, which any one less absent and unsuspecting than Sir Noah would certainly have noticed. And Ada felt vexed at this, to her, inexplicable and useless mystery, which she felt every moment it would be more impossible for her to unravel in a manner satisfactory to her husband and herself ; for, " oh what a tangled web we weave, when once we venture to deceive !" and to one so true and frank as Ada, one who generally in her innocent and artless prattle amused Sir Noah with every little detail of her innocent days, there was as much deception in withholding this fact, as there would have been in conveying a falsehood.

Sir Noah did not, as usual, retire to his study after the gentlemen had repaired to

Ada's tea-table ; restless and wretched, he followed them to the drawing-room. His habitual absence of mind was such, that Ada did not notice that the tone of his voice was altered—that he was watchful instead of being wrapt—constrained—that he sighed deeply and often, and placed himself so that he could catch every tone of Ada's voice, and every glance of her beautiful eyes. Perhaps the major and Adolphus, more experienced in such matters than Ada, were aware of this fact, for a sort of restraint and gloom stole over the usually animated party ; and at an early hour the guests took their leave, and Ada hastened to her nursery.

CHAPTER X.

“ You see,” said Fitzopal, “ the old fossil is becoming a sort of antediluvian Othello; that is all the doing of my odious old uncle. I asked him when he had last heard from Mr. Grumbleby, and in a tone I shall never forget—so harsh, and yet so desponding was it—he said, ‘ To-day I had a long letter from your uncle, sir ! ’ ”

“ Oh, I see plainly,” replied Major Smiley, “ there’s no time to be lost. In a little while, he’ll grow savage, shut her up, and forbid us the house ; or he’ll be so miserable, that she, full as she is of mistaken notions about a wife’s duty and devotion, will of her own accord, sacrifice us,

(or rather you,) and break off an intimacy which has become a source of uneasiness to her husband. What you do, you must do quickly ! The day after to-morrow, you must contrive to let her know, that you have resolved on death ; that all you wish, is to see her before you die ; you must tell her a fly will be in readiness to take her to your death-bed. Of course, you must couch all this in the most touching, romantic, and impassioned language. I should advise you to take something or other to make you look very ill, like Trevor did in the case of Miss Bullion, the millionaire ; and enclose a sort of will, leaving everything you possess to Ada,—that goes a wondrous way."

" But I have nothing to leave !"

" Oh, that does not matter, it is the love 'that lives beyond the tomb,' as evinced by your thinking of her interests after your death, that will touch her to her inmost heart. Of course, she would never think of acting on such a will ; if she did, she would be unworthy a thought ;

but the whole thing is a *ruse*, a device,—you are not going to poison yourself, or to summon her to your death-bed, all you want is to get her, by her own free will and consent, by stealth, and at night, to my house, and in your power,—is it not ?”

“ Yes ; but how bad and treacherous it sounds, Smiley, when you state it in that direct, unvarnished manner.”

“ Pshaw ! you know my blunt, straight-forward way, Fitz ; you are not an old maid, or a methodist ; you believe that what you are going to do, can injure her only if it compromise her fame, and that, we will take good care it shall not. You know she loves you—you know she must lead a very dreary, joyless life with that old antediluvian Noah ; you wish, without her having to blame her too sensitive and conscientious self, to cheat her into making you and herself happy,—that is the proper view to take of it. And I, my dear fellow, I so love you both, that I am impatient to see the two

dearest friends I have on earth, and who were certainly made for each other, happy, in spite of the frowns of fortune, the manœuvres of a match-making mother, and the girlish scruples of the most pure—but I believe, too, the most impassioned of her sex.”

So saying, the Calculator pressed Fitzopal's hand, who cordially returned that pressure.

They were driving in a two-horse fly, along the east cliff, to the abode of Major Smiley; the major's groom had taken their riding-horses home, and every now and then, the driver rose up, to attempt to reach with his whip, some one whom he detected in the act of hanging on behind.

“Holloa, driver!” cried Major Smiley, “how comes it your little peep-hole here behind is broken? I've got a stiff neck with this confounded draft.”

“It wasn't broken, sir, when I was fetched off the stand, that I can swear to,” said the driver; “I count it's been done by that ill-look-

ing ruffian of a chap, as has been dodging we, ever since we set out, and been hanging on behind for the last hour, as I could tell by the weight. He ain't arter no good,—a down-looking, muffled-up customer, as is ashamed to show his mug."

So saying, the driver alighted, and held a piece of candle from one of the lamps, to the little window in the back of the fly.—"Ha!" said he, "looker here, sir, it's cut out as neat as wax; no glazier could beat that; that's done with a diamond, and I dare say your pockets is cleaned out!"

The captain and the major searched them, but had lost nothing.

"Well, then, I suppose I frightened him, afore he'd prigged. I hope you haven't been talking no secrets, gentlemen," said the driver, jocosely, "for his ear has been close to your very lips, I'll be bound, this hour; and there he goes, I do believe, a running like mad."

Major Smiley looked in the direction of the

driver's whip, and there, just emerged from the deepest shadow, into the bright moonlight, and running at a rate which defied pursuit, Major Smiley recognised with a shudder, the muffled and ruffianly looking man, who seemed to act as a perpetual spy upon all his movements—one whom he felt certain was in the secret of the abduction and restoration of Lady Fathom's child, and who now was in all probability fully possessed of the secret designs of himself and Fitzopal, at least as far as he had chosen to reveal them himself to his friend.

Often had he cursed in his heart, this mysterious, and to him almost maddening *espionage*; but never did he do so more bitterly than on this night.

However, Major Smiley was no person to waste important time in vain fears or useless regrets; before he retired to rest that night, he induced Adolphus Fitzopal to concoct the letter which was to bring Ada into this cruel snare. And after this was done, he devoted

another hour to the counterplot, which was to remove Fitzopal, and substitute his far more dangerous and remorseless self.

The letter, prompted 'certainly by passion in both plotters, but worded with the most delicate, romantic, and devoted tenderness, was one which must have worked upon the feelings of any woman, and certainly would have induced the most cautious, to risk something to save a life which seemed so entirely, so miserably sacrificed to her.

The plan was, that Fitzopal should not appear at all for the next two days, but that Major Smiley should call as usual, and continue to awaken Ada's tenderness and her fears, by describing Adolphus as seriously ill and morbidly dejected; then, on the third day, when Ada's alarm was at its height, she should receive Adolphus's summons to his death-bed. "And," said Smiley, "you may already look upon her as your own, for there is not a woman in the world who could resist such an appeal—nor

I should think a man, who, after all this trouble, would be fool enough to let her escape. There is one difficulty yet, that perverse little Janet has set her heart on going, on the very day of your triumph, to fetch her own child. Now, after the abduction of little Noah, I know full well, Lady Fathom never stirs from his side, except when Janet promises not to leave him for a moment; so that to give Ada an opportunity of coming hither, Janet must put off her journey for one day, at least."

"How provoking!" said Adolphus, who, with excitement, passion, and perhaps some remorse, was far from well, and looked wretchedly pale and anxious,—“I foresee an impediment there, and I do so hate suspense,—I so wish Friday night were come!"

"Oh, do not fear!" said the major, "you say I am a regular Don Juan, and so I do not mind telling you that I have unlimited control over the movements of Mistress Janet; she will go or stay, just as I please, and that I took

an opportunity of telling her on the beech last night, where I left her weeping like another Ariadne. But be of good cheer, Fitz, she is in no position to dispute a point with me, and her journey will certainly be put off till Saturday. Oh," he added, with a self-sufficient smile, and an odious wink,—“what slaves we handsome fellows can make of the proudest mistresses and most termagant maids! Good night, dear Fitz, and rosy dreams of lovely Ada!”

CHAPTER XI.

THE day before that on which our plotters had doomed that Ada should fall a victim to her own confiding pity, and their cruel and remorseless profligacy, a grand public breakfast was to be given in Brighton. All Ada's gayest friends were going; she made no doubt whatever that Fitzopal would be there; and Sir Noah, whose jealousy had taken another turn, having met Devereux Spight on the chain-pier, had allowed him to fasten himself on to him, and had asked him to partake of the private breakfast, which always preceded a public *déjeuner*.

The absence of the captain for two whole

days, while it filled Ada's gentle bosom with a vague uneasiness, had restored Sir Noah's comfort and repose; and the amiable and placable old man was in his best and gayest humour.

Janet had surprised Lady Fathom by an announcement that she wished to put off her visit to London till Saturday. She proposed this alteration with an attempt at a calm which ended in a burst of tears. Lady Fathom was curious to know what had induced Janet to put off her journey, for Ada was well aware that the poor young mother (a widowed mother, as she believed) had counted every hour to the happy day when she was to embrace her boy—her all of comfort and hope on earth.

Of course Major Smiley had taken good care not to give Janet the slightest hint of the reason why he wished her to postpone her journey. It was his will—the will of one whom her weakness had made her master, and in whom she saw of course one on whom her boy's future welfare greatly depended, and one who, with-

out ever committing himself by a promise, held out a sort of vague but all-powerful hope, that devotion to his service, and unquestioning obedience to his wishes, might yet induce him to bestow on her that title which might prevent her blushing some day in presence of her son.

Janet, therefore, not being of an inventive genius (alias a liar), and not knowing why she was called on to postpone her journey, but of course aware she must not ascribe it to the tyrant influence of one, who only passed with Lady Fathom for her benefactor, took refuge in silence. Ada, seeing the question pained her, and suddenly remembering that the Highlanders are very superstitious, guessed that Janet had either seen the new moon through a glass, or spilt the salt, or, better still, was unwilling to undertake this journey on Friday. This last suggestion of her ready imagination seemed to her so satisfactory, that she smilingly said,—“ Well, Janet, Saturday let it be then, and that will give to-day and to-morrow for my

holiday, for when you are gone, after the dreadful and mysterious abduction of my darling, I can never trust him one minute out of my sight ; and now I am going to dress for this public breakfast. You, Janet, had better, with the nurse and Susan, take little Noah on the beech."

While Ada was making a light and fashionable toilet, and sipping her chocolate in her dressing-room, Sir Noah, who had been out on the chain-pier betimes, had brought Devereux Spight home to a *tête-à-tête* breakfast with himself in his study. In the meantime, Stubbs, aware that Sir Noah was going to escort her ladyship to this public breakfast, and meant to make a much more elaborate toilet than usual, busied himself in displaying all the finery Sir Noah could boast ; but it was with a dejected and mortified air that the faithful valet took up one garment after another, and at length exclaimed,—“ Well to be sure, wonders will never cease ! to see the change in measter—how he’s

taken at last to dress himself hout and to pinch himself in—how he follies my lady about to scenes of wanity and vexation, gives up the noble pursuit of genology, makes a dead stop on the intellectooal rally, and a halt in the march of hintelleck! Well, well! all else is discoverable and understandable, but one thing baffles us all—and that's woman's natur! To think of that Rose Pink! I thought she'd be pleased to hear uncle's mending so fast, and there she've never even answered my letter; and so, afore I left Lunnun the last time, I passed her ous—she wouldn't see me, no more than if I was hair. One day all smiles, the next, dull and dismal as a Lunnun fog. Oh woman! woman! great marble of the creation! thy tongue the perpetual motion, and thy smile the philosopher's stone, a turning all to gold! Ah me! Ah, my measter's in for it, and so am I; we're both victims of the bewitchingness, the contrariness, and the parvarsity of the female sect. I'll think no more about her—I'll drive her from

my mind—I must keep pace with the times, and here they is. I'll just cast my hie over the leader—Clever, fust-rate; but too harstocratik by half, my lad; you should just hear me advocate wote by bullet, and uniwersal suffering, at our hanual radekel meeting. And now, by Job! why here's the Ornet, and directed to measter, in Squire Grumbleby's hand,—a weno-mous reptile of a paper. Let's look at it! —Passonal!—too passonal for me!—why, what's this here? 'A Scientific Baronet!' 'Belgrave Square.' Why, that must mean us! 'Bequeathe at his death.' 'A orned hass!' Why, I didn't know we'd got one in our mausoleum! How proud measter 'll be! Hush, here he comes! brisk as a bee, and singing somewhat of a toon! Oh, ooman! ooman! who can fathom thy natur; or hexplain thy hinfluence?"

At this peroration, Sir Noah entered the room, jauntily, and sat down before the glass, exclaiming,—“Stubbs, can you curl hair?"

"Why, Lord, measter!" replied Stubbs, "you ain't a going to have your 'air, alias your venerable wig, curled, surely?"

"And why not, Stubbs?"

"Why, Lor sir, I always thought as how curls without, bespoked emptiness within,—and at your time o' life, too, Sir Noah!"

"Why," replied Sir Noah, kindly, "mine, Stubbs, is the very time of life when a man wants a little help from art, because nature begins to fail him. Can you give this hair a trim, before your lady comes to fetch me?"

"Why, in course I can, sir," said Stubbs, half crying; "what that empty-headed Frizz can do, I shan't go for to fail in, surely; but indeed, Sir Noar, you looks a deal more natooral and venerable as you is!"

"No matter for that, Stubbs—Ladies are not lovers of the venerable. Lady Fathom likes curls. I've often heard her admire the captain's dark curls, and the major's light ones. So go, Stubbs, be quick, and get some curling-tongs!"

Stubbs went reluctantly.

"Ah," said Sir Noah to himself, "Grumbleby will look rather silly after all his croaking. How my darling will like me in curls!"

"Oh, ooman! ooman!" said Stubbs, as he went in search of the tongs. "Oh, Rose! Rose! Perhaps she'd like me in curls too!"

"Yes, yes," said Sir Noah, (for he had a habit of soliloquising,)—"yes, a few curls, a new coat, a gay waistcoat, a polished boot, white kid gloves, and a scented pocket handkerchief, and she'll find me charming as the gayest of them! Sweet little Ada! darling wee wife! I forgot how woman's eye delights in outward show—She cannot look within. I have neglected her charms, and my own,—I'll do so no more! at least, not for the present. Adieu for a while, the calm delights of science, my dear museum, my rare collection, my engrossing treatise on Fossil Remains. Farewell, a long farewell, I now belong to love, to youth, to gaiety, and Ada! She prefer any one to her

own Noah ! How she wore my picture in her dear, true bosom ! how she wept its destruction ! how she smiled when I promised her another ! and if she loved me thus when I was so blindly negligent, so vilely dressed, so dull, so absent, so unloveable, what will she do now, when for her sake, I add to all that won her gratitude, all that can please her taste and captivate her fancy ? Oh, Grumbleby, you are an old fool—that worst of fools, the seeming wise !”

Stubbs now returned with the tongs and a sheet of curling-paper ; “ I must put in a few papers, Sir Noah,” he said, “ for fear of a congregation ;” then added as he did so, “ Oh my ! I’ve seen Rose in papers before now.”

“ Very well, Stubbs,” said Sir Noah ; “ do it as you think best, I leave that entirely to you ; but put the papers in as I sit here, that I may judge of the effect as you go on. Be very particular about parting the curls on the forehead, Stubbs, your lady likes that style.”

Stubbs sighed and said, “ Here’s the Hornet,

perhaps you'll look at it while I put in these papers."

"Pshaw!" said Sir Noah; "I never read such rubbish, where's the Times?"

"Oh, but do please to look at this article in the Hornet, sir; it's about us, sir,—I'm sure it must mean us!"

Sir Noah took the paper, and while Stubbs made his wig a very porcupine of *papillotes*, he read the venomous and cruel article with which the reader is already acquainted.

After perusing the first few lines, their full and horrible meaning dawned on his mind—he started up with a hideous yell, and then sank down again, hiding his face in his hands, and groaning heavily.

"Measter! measter!" cried Stubbs, "why I haven't burnt him, sure? oh no, no, there ain't a singe on the paper. What can be the matter? oh my! oh my!" Stubbs fans Sir Noah with the Hornet."

"I shall be better presently," said Sir Noah,

in a hollow voice ; “ leave me now, Stubbs ; do you hear ? ” he added, as Stubbs made no motion to obey ; “ leave me ! Go sir, I command you ! ” he shouted forth, furiously starting to his feet. “ Begone ! do you conspire to mock me ? go ! ”

Poor Stubbs stole away reluctantly, sobbing as he went, “ Oh, ooman, ooman ! ”

For some time Sir Noah sat after this burst of passion, still as death—then suddenly the anguish of his soul burst forth in words—“ Oh, Ada ! oh, my darling ! ” he exclaimed, “ just when I felt so proud, so secure, so happy ! just when I had resolved to sacrifice everything to you ! ” Fairly overcome, Sir Noah burst into tears, then starting up, he exclaimed, “ But no ! no ! it may be false,—it must ! shall I put the vile calumnies of a hired slanderer in the scale with her purity, her innocence, the angel of life ! and he a nameless wretch, who will, perhaps, readily eat his own damnable words—for his lies are his bread ? I’ll not condemn her yet !

oh, harder were her heart than primeval granite—more cunning her nature than that of the Stealthy Plesiosaurus—more ravenous of guilty pleasure than the Dinotherium—could she deceive me thus! Fairer in my eyes, oh Ada! than the fossil remains of the first armadillo;—my child's mother too! Triumph, Grumbleby! Oh, if she is false, what to me my museum—what my treatise—what my essay—what to me henceforth the stratified remains of ten thousand worlds? But stop, I'll speak to that accursed Devereux Spight, I hear he is connected with this most damnable paper." At this moment Stubbs, who was very uneasy in his mind at the state in which he had left his master, seized the opportunity of a letter having been brought for Sir Noah, to beg admittance to his presence.

"Come in," said Sir Noah, in a voice so changed and so sepulchral, that Stubbs scarcely recognised it. "Come in, is Mr. Spight still here?"

“ He is gone out for a few minutes, Sir Noah, but left word he would return presently.”

“ When he does return, show him up here. Give me that letter, and go.”

Stubbs handed the letter with a trembling hand, and shrunk away, but only to watch in the passage ; so much did he dread his master's doing something rash, in his present excited and inexplicable state. Sir Noah opened the letter ; the first words arrested his attention. It ran thus:—

“ *Private and Immediate.*

“ You have a gay and young wife, and she has two treacherous, profligate, designing ‘friends,’ alias ‘foes.’—A word to the wise—if she is not already the victim of a certain major, (a base, calculating villain,) she will probably become so, whether by her own consent or not I cannot say, to-morrow (Friday) night, when she will repair alone, and in private, to a remote place, ten miles from Brighton, on the East Cliff, and

called Cliff-house. This place is the present abode of Major S—— and Captain F——. A fly will be waiting for her at the corner of the square, about nine o'clock in the evening. She will imagine she is repairing to a rendezvous with her cousin, and she will fall into the power of a far more base and remorseless man. You can act as you please on this information—what I advise is, that you silently watch, so as to be sure of the facts. At the last moment you can prevent the meeting.

“A WELL-WISHER.”

“P.S.—Your wife has already honoured Cliff-house with a visit,—did she tell you so? I fancy not.”

A violent paroxysm of rage, jealousy, and despair, followed the perusal of this cold but horrible letter; and to this paroxysm succeeded a sort of stupor. Sir Noah was aroused from this latter state, by the entrance of Stubbs, who announced that Mr. Devereux Spight was below.

“Show him up!” groaned Sir Noah, turning on Stubbs a face of ghastly pallor, but to which the curl-papers in his wig lent a horrible comicality. “Go, fool! go!” he shouted, seeing Stubbs approaching him instead of hastening to the door!

“Shan’t I take out the papers first, sir?” said Stubbs, trembling.

“No, curse the papers!” said Sir Noah, rising, and purple with rage,—“I want to show them to him. Begone!”

“Mad as a March hare!” murmured Stubbs, (who understood Sir Noah meant the curl-papers) of which he had forgotten the existence, while thinking only of the Hornet.) “To want to show them to him! Oh my! oh my! he’s fit for Bedlam, I declare; and this is all ooman’s doing, or I’m a fossle!”

“And I,” groaned poor Sir Noah, as the tears dimmed his spectacles, “improving my poor remnant of personal attractions to please her! I, believing she had always liked, and might yet

love me ! I, who so adored her, that to her I was about to immolate every other pursuit, every other pleasure ! I, who had left her every thing I possess on earth, save the entailed estates—I would have left her them if I could. She shall know what she has lost ! Lost ? oh fool ! I only am to blame ! What had I to do with science—I, wedded to a young and lovely wife ?—or rather, wedded to science, what had I to do with a young and lovely wife ? Ha, here he comes ; now, patience, he shall not triumph in a husband's anguish."

Spight entered with an expression of great suavity,—his quick eye detected the Hornet on the table. Sir Noah had gone into an inner room, to recover his composure. "Ha, ha !" thought Spight, "that's unlucky ; I see, while arraying himself for his young wife, he has been stung by the Hornet !"

Sir Noah entered, trying to be calm. Spight at the first view of his *papillotes*, and his face purple with suppressed emotion, could scarcely restrain a laugh.

Sir Noah's efforts were vain,—in ungovernable fury he burst forth, holding out the *Hornet*,—

“Look here, sir! Look here! Have you anything to do with this?”

“At least, let me look at it, sir,” said Spight, with assumed dignity, withdrawing a little from his furious assailant.

“Yes, yes; look at it, sir! and then, if you are, as I have been told, the editor of this damnable paper, tell me why I should not horsewhip you all round the town!”

“I pardon your language, Sir Noah,” said Spight, growing very pale, “because I respect your anguish; I see this paragraph with unspeakable concern, but on my honour, sir,—my honour as the editor of the *Hornet*, I have no hand in this!”

“Then, sir,” said Sir Noah, growing pale and sinking into his chair, “by whom is it inserted?”

“That, sir,” said Spight, “it shall be my study to ascertain, and having ascertained, signify to punish!”

“Mr. Spight!” (said the credulous and simple Sir Noah, extending a hand, cold and clammy with the violence of his emotions,) “I retract my hasty expressions. Discover, and let me know the author. On him, and not on you, my revenge shall fall!” “But yet,” he added, suddenly rising, and passionately clasping his hands, “what avails revenge!—will it restore her fame, or my honour!—can it recall her love?”

“Sir Noah!” said Spight, taking out a snow-white pocket-handkerchief, and pretending to weep; “it grieves me to the soul to see you thus! I am not easily moved! but this unmans me. She may be innocent! all this has no proof. Much as I try to check the slanderous tone, and raise the moral standard of the paper, with which my necessities as the disinherited son of an ancient house compelled me to connect myself, I am yet too well acquainted with the *dessous de cartes* in these matters, not to know that these distressing reports have frequently

little or no foundation ; and though I am editor of the *Hornet*, I am well aware that the world attaches little importance to these insinuations, which I grieve to say, the sub-editor, a snarling fellow, generally throws out, when business prevents my supervising the paper myself. At any rate, the paragraph is so vague, and the allusions so remote, no one will understand them, and they do not, in reality, the least affect her ladyship's character ; she may be perfectly innocent even of the shadow of an imprudence !”

“ Mr. Spight !” said Sir Noah, going up to the crafty editor with his hand extended, and tears gushing down his cheeks,—“ give me your hand ; you are a man of honour and of feeling, forgive my late suspicions,—she may—she must be innocent !”

“ She may, Sir Noah. God grant she prove so ! but be advised,—do nothing rashly—seem not to suspect, yet watch her closely ; you owe it to her to lose no chance of establishing her purity—you owe it to yourself if she *has* erred, not to

be ignorant of it. Forgive my speaking thus freely on so delicate a subject—I was led into doing so, first by a wish to defend and exculpate myself, and next by an ardent desire to comfort you. If I can be of any use, Sir Noah, command me; both myself and the Hornet are at your service.”

“Thank you, thank you, my dear, Spight,” said poor Sir Noah,—“I depend on your discretion, and the kind heart you have shown. Oh, she must be innocent, with that angel face, that smile,—she must, she must ! and if so, my life shall be one effort to please her, and to atone for the wrong this doubt has done her ! But, oh ! if guilty,” he added wildly to himself,—“well, if so, I am so much to blame for my accursed neglect, that I will not be harsh. Divorced, in that case, she, alas ! must be—for the name of Fathom must not be borne by a ——. Oh, no, no, no, I cannot call her by that devilish name ! And yet if guilty, the world will, her conscience will—and worse still, her God will, on the judg-

ment-day ! Nor shall I stand acquitted—I had the keeping of a spotless soul, and left it to the serpent's deadly wiles. No, she shall have wealth, poor wretch ! she shall not be driven upon vice for bread. Nay, more, I will not kill her chosen, her beloved—money may make him wed her ! else she may sin with more, and be the more accursed ! And oh, our child—for him I'll try to live when I would fain lie down and die !”

All the latter part of Sir Noah's speech, he had uttered rapidly, and unconscious of Spight's presence ; at the conclusion, he buried his face in his hands, and sobbed convulsively. Spight not knowing what to do, and a little moved by the anguish he had partly caused, slunk away. He had a vague idea, that he might contrive to turn to good account, the sudden friendship and confidence of the wealthy Sir Noah ! Spight's affairs were just now far from flourishing, several unsuccessful law-suits had half ruined the Hornet. The heiress, even with her five hundred per annum, of which Spight had made so sure,

seemed perfectly unattainable ; and Spight was even now at Brighton, to hide himself from a stalwart peer whom he had shewn up in the Hornet, and who had sworn to horsewhip him. As ill-luck would have it, just as Spight was ruminating on the advantages to be derived from Sir Noah's purse, his influence, and patronage, he caught a distant view of the defamed and incensed Lord St. Leger, who always walked abroad armed with a heavy riding-whip. He was talking to a friend, and Spight was not sure he had seen him ; but the doubt was quite enough—Spight darted off full speed in the direction of the station, and did not feel at all safe till he found himself dashing along the rail-road to London, at the rate of forty miles an hour.

CHAPTER XII.

SIR NOAH, finding himself quite unequal to the public breakfast, had sent a message to Ada, signifying a wish to be excused ; and Ada, who in the meantime had had a visit from Major Smiley, had been so much depressed and alarmed by the sad account he gave her of Adolphus Fitzopal's state, both of body and mind, that it was quite a relief to her to be released from the effort of appearing in public.

“ You do not think there is any danger for my cousin ?” said Ada, clasping her hands, and tears starting to her eyes.

Major Smiley did not answer.

“Has he had no advice?” asked Ada, in wild alarm.

“You do not understand his case,” said Major Smiley; “the mind is much more affected than the body. But I am not justified in staying any longer away from him. I mean to take Doctor H—— out with me, to see him; and to-morrow you shall hear how he is. Poor fellow! he is certain he will not survive to-morrow night,—an absurd and insane fancy, but we have not now to learn the powers of imagination in these matters. But you look ill yourself,—do go and lie down. Be sure your cousin has a brother watching over him when I am by.”

Ada retired to her room, but not to rest; pale and sick, her eyes swollen with tears, she shut herself up, to await the morrow; while poor Sir Noah, alone in his room, continued to suffer the tortures we have vainly tried to depict. The next day Ada received a letter from her cousin, but it was conveyed to her by Janet, who had it from Major Smiley, and its contents

“Show him up!” groaned Sir Noah, turning on Stubbs a face of ghastly pallor, but to which the curl-papers in his wig lent a horrible comicality. “Go, fool! go!” he shouted, seeing Stubbs approaching him instead of hastening to the door!

“Shan’t I take out the papers first, sir?” said Stubbs, trembling.

“No, curse the papers!” said Sir Noah, rising, and purple with rage,—“I want to show them to him. Begone!”

“Mad as a March hare!” murmured Stubbs, (who understood Sir Noah meant the curl-papers) of which he had forgotten the existence, while thinking only of the Hornet.) “To want to show them to him! Oh my! oh my! he’s fit for Bedlam, I declare; and this is all ooman’s doing, or I’m a fossle!”

“And I,” groaned poor Sir Noah, as the tears dimmed his spectacles, “improving my poor remnant of personal attractions to please her! I, believing she had always liked, and might yet

love me ! I, who so adored her, that to her I was about to immolate every other pursuit, every other pleasure ! I, who had left her every thing I possess on earth, save the entailed estates—I would have left her them if I could. She shall know what she has lost ! Lost ? oh fool ! I only am to blame ! What had I to do with science—I, wedded to a young and lovely wife ?—or rather, wedded to science, what had I to do with a young and lovely wife ? Ha, here he comes ; now, patience, he shall not triumph in a husband's anguish."

Spight entered with an expression of great suavity,—his quick eye detected the Hornet on the table. Sir Noah had gone into an inner room, to recover his composure. "Ha, ha !" thought Spight, "that's unlucky ; I see, while arraying himself for his young wife, he has been stung by the Hornet !"

Sir Noah entered, trying to be calm. Spight at the first view of his *papillotes*, and his face purple with suppressed emotion, could scarcely restrain a laugh.

Sir Noah's efforts were vain,—in ungovernable fury he burst forth, holding out the *Hornet*,—

“Look here, sir! Look here! Have you anything to do with this?”

“At least, let me look at it, sir,” said Spight, with assumed dignity, withdrawing a little from his furious assailant.

“Yes, yes; look at it, sir! and then, if you are, as I have been told, the editor of this damnable paper, tell me why I should not horsewhip you all round the town!”

“I pardon your language, Sir Noah,” said Spight, growing very pale, “because I respect your anguish; I see this paragraph with unspeakable concern, but on my honour, sir,—my honour as the editor of the *Hornet*, I have no hand in this!”

“Then, sir,” said Sir Noah, growing pale and sinking into his chair, “by whom is it inserted?”

“That, sir,” said Spight, “it shall be my study to ascertain, and having ascertained, signally to punish!”

“ Mr. Spight !” (said the credulous and simple Sir Noah, extending a hand, cold and clammy with the violence of his emotions,) “ I retract my hasty expressions. Discover, and let me know the author. On him, and not on you, my revenge shall fall !” “ But yet,” he added, suddenly rising, and passionately clasping his hands, “ what avails revenge !—will it restore her fame, or my honour !—can it recall her love ?”

“ Sir Noah !” said Spight, taking out a snow-white pocket-handkerchief, and pretending to weep ; “ it grieves me to the soul to see you thus ! I am not easily moved ! but this unmans me. She may be innocent ! all this has no proof. Much as I try to check the slanderous tone, and raise the moral standard of the paper, with which my necessities as the disinherited son of an ancient house compelled me to connect myself, I am yet too well acquainted with the *dessous de cartes* in these matters, not to know that these distressing reports have frequently

little or no foundation ; and though I am editor of the *Hornet*, I am well aware that the world attaches little importance to these insinuations, which I grieve to say, the sub-editor, a snarling fellow, generally throws out, when business prevents my supervising the paper myself. At any rate, the paragraph is so vague, and the allusions so remote, no one will understand them, and they do not, in reality, the least affect her ladyship's character ; she may be perfectly innocent even of the shadow of an imprudence !”

“ Mr. Spight !” said Sir Noah, going up to the crafty editor with his hand extended, and tears gushing down his cheeks,—“ give me your hand ; you are a man of honour and of feeling, forgive my late suspicions,—she may—she must be innocent !”

“ She may, Sir Noah. God grant she prove so ! but be advised,—do nothing rashly—seem not to suspect, yet watch her closely ; you owe it to her to lose no chance of establishing her purity—you owe it to yourself if she *has* erred, not to

be ignorant of it. Forgive my speaking thus freely on so delicate a subject—I was led into doing so, first by a wish to defend and exculpate myself, and next by an ardent desire to comfort you. If I can be of any use, Sir Noah, command me; both myself and the Hornet are at your service.”

“Thank you, thank you, my dear, Spight,” said poor Sir Noah,—“I depend on your discretion, and the kind heart you have shown. Oh, she must be innocent, with that angel face, that smile,—she must, she must! and if so, my life shall be one effort to please her, and to atone for the wrong this doubt has done her! But, oh! if guilty,” he added wildly to himself,—“well, if so, I am so much to blame for my accursed neglect, that I will not be harsh. Divorced, in that case, she, alas! must be—for the name of Fathom must not be borne by a ——. Oh, no, no, no, I cannot call her by that devilish name! And yet if guilty, the world will, her conscience will—and worse still, her God will, on the judg-

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blanched her cheek, and deprived her of consciousness.

It was that cruel and crafty letter, which we are aware Smiley and Fitzopal had concocted together, to induce Ada to peril all dear to woman, and visit Adolphus by night at Cliff-house.

But Ada thought not of herself in the first instance,—as she read, she only thought of Adolphus, dying! the cousin she loved so well, and had loved from childhood,—the kind, the gentle, the endearing, the devoted! Of the truth of his statement, and the reality of his danger, Ada had not a doubt. Although he had not ventured to say as much in direct terms, Ada felt sure that she was the cause of this terrible misfortune. She glanced at the will, through eyes blinded with tears, and snatching up a pen, and not allowing herself time to think, (for Janet had told her that Smiley awaited her answer on the beech,) she in a few impassioned words implored her cousin to struggle with his despair, and promised at all risks to visit

him at the appointed time. He spoke so confidently of this, as a last favour granted to a dying man, that Ada now wept to think of the instances she had heard of such presentiments being verified, and now started and grew pallid with terror, as the more probable solution of his mysterious words—namely, that he had taken measures to realise the catastrophe he prophesied—curdled the blood in her heart. It was about four in the afternoon that Ada received the terrible letter, which decided her on going alone and in secret to Cliff-house, in the conveyance which Adolphus told her would await her at the corner of the square in which she lived.

She had written in reply, under the influence of terror, grief, and tenderness,—she had acted upon impulse, but five long hours of reflection put things in a different point of view. Ada, though so young, was not quite inexperienced in the world and its code. Nearly three years of wedded life, and a season in London, had forced on her knowledge something of this world's wis-

dom, to counterbalance a little the credulous simplicity of her nature, and her child-like innocence of evil. Ada knew the truth of the wily Frenchwoman's remark, (How truly French, such an inducement, held out by a mother to a daughter, to be pure in conduct !) "*Songez qu' à la fin tout est sçu.*" And she felt that if it were known that she had visited her cousin alone, by night, in so remote a place, the world would put a very false and harsh construction on a mere act of mercy. When once doubts and fears of this kind had taken possession of her mind, they for a time excluded the torturing thoughts of Fitzopal's danger. She began to ask herself, what right she had—she, a wife, a mother, to peril the fair fame so valuable to her husband and her child.

At one moment, vivid fancy brought so forcibly before her the perils of this rash excursion, that she resolved to give it up, and the next she thought of her Adolphus dying, perhaps by his own hand, and whose doom she might yet possi-

bly avert; this determined her to risk all, and strong in her own innocence, and faith in him, to rush to his rescue.

And while in this terrible conflict, the hours seemed to steal rapidly away. Sir Noah's watch was fraught with an anguish drearier even than Ada's. He knew, for he had resolved to know all—he knew that Ada had received a letter given by Major Smiley to Janet, (this Stubbs had contrived to ascertain for him.) He knew, too, that Ada, pleading a violent head-ache, kept her room, and by dint of watching, he had ascertained that she was in grief, for he had listened and had heard her sob and her moan. There was some comfort in those sounds, they denoted a struggle, a remorse. "As yet," he murmured to himself, "she has not sinned! else this meeting would not cost her all this anguish." Yet, a little before nine, Sir Noah perceived with horror, by the rising moon, the fly standing at the corner of the square, and a few minutes later he heard Ada open her window, probably

to ascertain that it was there; and he had only time to conceal himself in the small ante-room, when Ada, with a black mantle thrown over her white dress, repaired to the nursery, where her child slept.

“Guilty! guilty! at least in intention,” gasped Sir Noah; “she is going to take leave of her child!”

Ada sent Janet down stairs on some pretext, and fell on her knees by her child’s cot.

She remained some time in silent prayer, and then rising, she exclaimed, “No, no! I cannot do it! I cannot peril, even to save Adolphus, my husband’s love, and that fair fame my boy will one day glory in, for his mother’s sake. I know all eyes are on me—I know all tongues are ready to defame. I will write kindly, but firmly, and send Janet in that very carriage with my letter. Alas! how will he bear my refusal?”

As she pondered, Janet came in with a note; Ada recognised Major Smiley’s hand, and bade Janet leave her; trembling and pale, she read,—

“There is no time to be lost,—I will not paralyze you by details too horrible for your eye. Something may yet be done, if you come directly ! But there is one who waits not !—G. S.”

“One who waits not ?” thought Ada,—“he means Death. Oh God ! Adolphus has destroyed himself ; I see it now, cold, hard-hearted woman that I am, I might have saved him. But no, he says something may yet be done, if I set off directly ; there is then hope, I will go ! nothing, not even a husband’s commands should detain me now !”

So saying, Ada wrapped her mantle round her head and her form, and hastened to the door. “How still the house seems ; how the floor creaks in this dread silence ; how heavy seems the step that treads the tortuous path of mystery ! Oh for one word of comfort or of counsel ! and yet of whom can I take counsel ?” She looked back at her child’s crib,—“Ah, there he sleeps and smiles—I must embrace him once ! I feel as if it were the last fond kiss. Of whom

can I take counsel? Oh, impious question! of my Heavenly Father! he will guide those who seek him earnestly. Then let me pray!"

For some minutes Ada remained in silent prayer, and the counsel she sought, stole into her heart; she rose, a radiant hope succeeded her fears. "Thank thee, Father in Heaven!" she cried; "I never thought of that. How strange! so natural, so simple an alternative! Of course, I will seek counsel of my husband—my cherub's father! the noblest, kindest, best of husbands, and of men! What is even poor Adolphus, to such ties as these—a wife—a mother? Thou, Father above! thou hast guided me aright; thou hast taught me where to seek for counsel, and for aid. How could I dream of going without his sanction? Noah! Noah! dear Sir Noah!" she cried, rushing to the door, and calling aloud, as if she feared she might yet be weak enough to change her mind. "Help! help! come! come! come to me di-

Sir Noah, who was close at hand, rushed in, and caught her in his arms.

“What ails my darling?” he asked, trembling with a joyful anticipation of the fact.

“If I tell you all, you will do nothing rash? promise me that, Noah!”

“I do promise, my love!”

“Then look here, Noah, and counsel me;” as she spoke, she gave her husband Adolphus’s letter, and Major Smiley’s note. Ada watched him attentively as he read them. He changed colour frequently; but at last, with a look of scorn, he said,—“It is a base device, my love; my blessed, spotless love, I have reason to know that this Major Smiley is a cold, profligate villain, and your cousin a tool in his calculating hands; you would not trust yourself alone at night in the house of any man, my darling?”

“No, only in a case of life and death like this; besides, I have already, dearest, been in Major Smiley’s house, and no saint could have been treated with more reverence than I was.”

Ada then gave her husband an account of the little accident which had drawn her there, and of her cousin's (to her inexplicable) entreaty to her, not to mention the subject to Sir Noah.

Sir Noah clasped her fondly to his heart, and said, "Thank you, bless you, oh my darling wife, for this new proof of your confidence; you know not—you can never know the weight this simple story takes from my heart. Look here, my love! and learn how watchful eyes misconstrue the most innocent actions!" Sir Noah as he spoke displayed before Ada's wondering gaze the anonymous letter he had received.

Ada shuddered.

"But yet," she said "one cannot put much faith in an anonymous letter like that; all may be too, too true. Adolphus has looked wild and strange of late, ghastly pale and very miserable, and Major Smiley, whom we know so well, who was the means of saving our child, it is not likely he should be so base. Perhaps some enemy of his has devised that slander to ruin him in your opinion.

What do we know against him or poor Adolphus?

"Nothing, I own; the only suspicious fact, to my mind, is their wishing you to hide from me your visit to their house."

"But you were so gloomy, so reserved, so unlike yourself, that night, perhaps they feared you might be jealous."

"Jealous! yes, I have been watching, Ada, while they thought I slept upon my post."

"Dear Noah! but see, suppose this should be true, suppose Adolphus either has attempted, or meditates some rash act—perhaps ere this—Oh! Noah! Noah! what shall I do?" and she wrung her hands.

"Well," said the simple Sir Noah, "even I do not feel very sure. I dare say he loves you; these young officers defy, in their wild desires, I fear, all laws of God and man, and laugh to scorn the very decalogue! 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife'—Perhaps those words might reach him yet. If he has dared to love you, he

is of course most miserable ; and it may be so ! for such an angel as my own sweet wife, the Dinotherium might go raving mad. But listen, darling Ada, a bright suggestion dawns upon my mind,—my confidence will thus repay your own. We will go together, dearest, to this scene of danger. If evil can be averted, together we will avert it ; if it is a snare, I think we shall indeed outwit these gallants. Union is force, my darling ! in wedded life, particularly ; and a husband's presence is a wife's best shield, not merely against the base profligacy of men, but from the venomous slanders of the world."

" Oh ! thank you, dearest Noah ! for so bright a thought. A carriage waits at the corner of the square ; give me your arm, my love. If this is true, your presence will enable me to bear the shock ; if false, what a triumph, to baffle them thus !"

So saying, leaning fondly on her husband's arm, Ada hurried to the fly, having first desired Janet on no account to leave little Noah for a moment alone.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was on the evening before that fixed upon by Major Smiley and Captain Fitzopal for Lady Fathom's visit, that the latter having completed his letter, and his will, handed them to the Major, who on perusing them prophesied everything which he knew his guest most desired.

“She cannot resist this, Fitz!” said the Major, “and as all stratagems are fair in love and war, even when she finds you dying—indeed, but only of love for her—I doubt if you will have any difficulty in compelling her to forgive a *ruse*, which will have secured your mutual happiness, without entailing any self-reproach on her.”

Pleased with this prospect, Adolphus sipped his wine, and enjoyed his excellent repast. But he was not destined to be long in possession of his luxurious seat in the softest of easy chairs, for Major Smiley's groom, with a face of terror, came in to announce that two men, whom he recognised as bailiffs, were at the door.

"Solomon's and Levi's bills, no doubt," gasped the Captain. "Ah, Smiley, our hopes deceived us then, their silence did not mean consent!"

"Fitz, my dear fellow," said the major, "do you dart through yon window, and take refuge in the stable; amuse yourself with saddling a horse in case of need. I will see these fellows, and ascertain the worst; they do not know us by sight, so they will serve this writ on me. If so, I will send you a line by Joseph; lose no time in that case, in getting off."

Fitzopal did as Major Smiley advised; in ten minutes he received these lines,—“Dearest Fitz, they have served their writ on me! Capital! is it not?—that vile Solomon, that odious Levi!

they have got some scoundrel to swear you are on the point of going abroad, therefore the writ is one of *capias*. I am pretending to pack up a few things necessary to my comfort in prison, do you dash off to the station, escape by the train, and since things are come to this pass, and you have not sent your letter to Lady F——, I implore you if you value your liberty and character, elope with the heiress, and attend to other matters, and more agreeable, when you can show your face again with safety. How these fellows will curse me, when, having given you time to escape, I tell them who I am. Capital ! Write, and I hope from Gretna !

“ Your devoted,—G. S.”

This ruse of the major's succeeded perfectly. Fitzopal made his escape, and as, except when buoyed up and talked over by Smiley, he had many misgivings and twitches of conscience about this dangerous and deceitful manœuvre, and many doubts whether he should not in the end

allow Ada to escape him, and thus incur the unsparing ridicule of the major, he was not on the whole quite inconsolable at this *contretemps*, and warmly congratulated himself upon its having occurred before the letter and the will had been sent to Lady Fathom.

“What should I have done?—what would she have thought of me?” he said to himself,—“had she received that letter, and acted upon it?—sweet, kind, sympathizing Ada! perhaps have risked name and fame to visit me at Cliff-house, to find me gone! I must have put a pistol to my head, to avoid seeming in her eyes, the most false, treacherous, designing, and inconsistent of men. It is a lucky escape that I have not committed myself; I will make sure of my heiress, and trust to fate for Ada’s love, when, as Smiley says, I can show myself again with safety, and to advantage too; for the consciousness of a good account at one’s bankers’, of first-rate appointments of every kind, and of owing no man a *sou*, gives one a great advantage in courting any

woman. I'm a lucky dog to have this Indian heiress at my beck and call, in this extremity; and this twenty pounds Gaspar has so kindly lent me, will enable me to elope with her, and hush up my affairs, till herself and her half million are mine! As the romantic fool has set her heart on Gretna,—Gretna, I suppose it must be. She'd better make the most of that tour, for she won't be honoured with my company, on any other, I fancy.

“It is a curious thing, that of all the women in the world, she's the most odious to me, independently of any love for Ada, I loathe her, for her conceit, pretension, vanity, affectation, her forward fondness, her manners so vulgarly fine, her conversation so odiously pedantic! Now if it were that *piquante* sparkling little Inez, (her pretended niece) I declare, though perhaps I could not be in love with two women at once, I could pass a very pleasant honey-moon with her, and if she were not jealous of Ada, I could take a pride in introducing her, and giving

parties, with that houri at the head of the table; or balls, of which she would do the honours like an Eastern Queen. I'm not sure but what, when once at ease about Ada, I could fall a little in love with my own wife, were that wife, Inez. But that odious piece of pedantry and affectation! Well, I must bear steadily in mind, not what she is, but what she *has*. If I can allow her to preside in any house of mine, there must be two establishments under one roof. It'll be solely, too, for the sake of having her protégé Inez to enliven me!"

With such thoughts as these Fitzopal beguiled the way. And Major Smiley, once sure that he was safely off, lost no time in letting the bailiffs (for bailiffs they really were) into the secret of whom they had served with a writ, (though not, as he had so deceitfully represented to Fitzopal, a writ of *capias*.) To console them, and get rid of their presence and their reproaches, Major Smiley ordered them refreshments, a bottle of wine, and a sovereign, and then he sauntered

forth alone, to ponder on the success of his daring scheme, at least so far, and to anticipate the rapture of receiving Ada, himself alone, defenceless, at night, in his own house.—“ Whatever she may think or feel,” he said to himself, “ she will not dare to make an exposé, which would reveal that she had come to Cliff-house, alone and at night, to visit a man whom the world already looks upon as her lover ; and whose character, as regards women, is, owing to his imprudence, as notorious as mine (thanks to my good name and caution) is excellent. No, no, how many women, having yielded to force or fraud, what they never would have granted to love or pity, have, after the first burst of feeling, wisely resolved to make the best of it. Janet did so, and Janet was pure and innocent, aye and proud too in her own way as Ada herself ! to be sure, she was passionately in love with me. And so perhaps will Ada be in the end ! Who knows but what, after all, the result of this may be, that I, who for so many months have pined my heart out,

planned, watched, worshipped—been guilty of manslaughter (for that cursed mistake about the man I, in a fit of insane jealousy mistook for Fitz-opal, and whom I now feel sure was her brother) was certainly a case of manslaughter, and may, for what I know, be one of murder, to say nothing about abduction, or child-stealing, (another capital offence,) and all for her sake ; who can tell but what, in the end, I, who have done all this, and suffered what no words can describe, without even one look of tenderness, or one chaste kiss to repay and feed my passion, may live to see her, as I have others ere now, implore the caresses she would now so disdain !

“ How long I sued for one kiss from Lucy, and when I stole one at last, how bitter and how real was her resentment ; and yet, two months later, she was in tears at my feet, reproaching me with having ceased to love and caress her ! Oh, Ada ! if it could ever be thus with you—but no, no ! exquisite Ada ! I feel as if I should love you the more, the more you were devoted to

me ! But I have felt and thought that before, and found it false—but then who was ever like Ada ! in form, face, mind, heart ! No, no, I cannot look beyond the rapture of compelling you to be mine ! I do believe this love will grow with what it feeds upon. No tears, no threats, no entreaties shall move me—once in my house I have sworn, and I swear it again, she shall be mine, even if the next day I were to mount the scaffold for my crime !”

CHAPTER XIV.

How signal was the Providence that watched over Ada, on the night when the remorseless Calculator had pledged his soul to her destruction! The hours wore heavily on, and Gaspar Smiley's impatience knew no bounds. To make sure of Ada's coming, he seconded Fitzopal's letter, by the note we have seen, and when the time appointed came, and Ada still delayed, he rushed about the house, wild with his impassionate impatience, and cursing every moment of delay, his hands clenched, and gnashing his teeth.

His plan was, when Ada arrived, to have her shown at once into the little boudoir on the first

floor, which opened into another room where he meant to be secreted. His groom, a bad, bold fellow, had orders gently to bolt the boudoir door on the outside, and thus as the room was lighted only by a skylight, Ada could not escape.

The struggle with herself—the prayer she had breathed for assistance, and the explanation with her husband, had caused a delay of at least an hour, in her departure from her own house to that of Major Smiley, and that hour, which was one of horrible suspense to Major Smiley, was one of torturing anxiety to poor Ada, who did not feel at all sure, that she was not about to witness some horrible tragedy, and to see her poor cousin either dying or dead ; these fears were shared in some degree by the simple and kind-hearted Sir Noah. And if the major's watch was one of impatient torture, the Fathoms' journey was the most painful they had ever performed.

At length, however, the straining eyes and watchful ears of Major Smiley, were regaled by

the sound of wheels. His cheek grew pale, his heart beat quick, and so overwhelmed was he by his emotions, that he rushed up stairs into his own room, in search of a cordial to recruit his shattered nerves.

This room was one which he and his unfortunate brother had shared as their uncle's guests in boyhood and in youth. His brother's bed was placed in a recess, or closet with sliding doors. It was generally locked, and could be secured either by a key without, or a bolt within. Major Smiley, who always endeavoured to banish from his mind, all recollection of this ill-fated victim of his first villainy, had never opened that recess ; and on the present occasion, while pouring out the cordial, which stood on his toilet, he was startled to hear a noise, as of some one stirring in the closet.

Major Smiley was, as we have said before, physically brave, but "conscience doth make cowards of us all," and his cheek grew white, and the glass fell from his nerveless hand, when

the words—" Gaspar Smiley, I am come at last, and come for vengeance!" broke upon his ear, and looking round aghast, he saw the sliding doors slowly open, and the wretchedly clad and muffled figure which had so long pursued him, throwing off, hat, cloak, and muffler, revealed the features, changed, worn, scarred, brutalised, but yet unforgotten, of his injured brother!

It was a horrible moment to Gaspar, that in which his brother stood before him. A gust of wind blew out the candle on the toilet, and by the bright but sepulchral light of the moon, the brothers gazed upon each other. And Gaspar saw a knife gleam in Anthony's hand! " Why do you seek me?—why are you here?" asked Gaspar.

" You know me then! You have not forgotten your first victim, eh?" said Anthony, seizing his brother's arm.

" I do know you, brother," said Gaspar, " and if you knew me, you would not call yourself my victim."

“A lie! a base lie!” said Anthony,—“you know it is a lie, and that but for other lies of yours, poured into the ear of a dying man, I should now be living here, in competence, the honoured husband of my first love—Marian Moore, instead of being, as I am, a hunted murderer, taking refuge here, and Marian your cast-off and forsaken harlot!”

“Brother!” said Gaspar, “I have no hope of convincing you, that you wrong me about our uncle. Some day the truth will prevail, and you will do me justice; but if it is true that you have done some deed, from the consequences of which you would fain take refuge, let me implore you to be cautious. Let me contrive your escape, and in order to do so, let me implore you to return to that closet, while I dispatch some business I have in hand. After which I will return and consult with you what is best to be done!”

“Thank you, most kind of brothers, but I mistrust thee, man, and should expect, were I in-

deed fool enough to put myself in your power, that I should only leave yon closet for a jail."

At this moment, the house-bell rang, the fly had driven to the door, and Major Smiley, frantic to be gone, exclaimed,—

"Do you believe, then, I would not, for my own sake, do all in my power to prevent the arrest of my father's son? Be advised, Anthony,—if you will not secure yourself in that closet, remain here till I return to you. Look, you can fasten the door. But let me leave you now. My fate depends on the next hour."

"It does indeed; but not as you imagine. You ruined my fortunes, you destroyed my fame, you seduced my affianced, you drove me to crime for bread, and I have lived through years of anguish for the luxury of revenge, and the hour of that revenge is come. Go if you will, to deceive another victim of your lies and of your lust, but you go not alone. I—I your brother, I who have dogged all your steps, and

watched all your tortuous ways for the last three months, I will at least save you from adding the crime of adultery to all your other sins; I will follow you into the presence of the deluded and injured lady, whom you have mercilessly tricked into your snares, under a pretext of saving the life of a fool and a coxcomb, weak and blind enough to be a tool in your hands. Ah, you grow pale, you tremble, you did not know I was in all your secrets. Come! come! it is ungallant to make a lady wait; but know that I am about to denounce you as the wretch who so remorselessly robbed her of her child, and very nearly deprived her of a brother! Come! come!"

"Oh God!" cried Major Smiley, ghastly pale, and trembling in every nerve, "is there no escape from a ruin so total, a disgrace so blasting?"

For a moment, he thought of rushing on his brother, seizing his dagger, and burying it in his heart; but Anthony, a much stronger and more

muscular man than Gaspar, kept his eye upon him, and stood firmly on the defensive. The clear moonlight played on Gaspar's face, while that of Anthony was in the deepest shadow.

"I read your brotherly wishes in your wolfish eyes; but beware, I am armed; I am on my guard, and I know you."

Gaspar Smiley sank on a chair and buried his face in his hands. Baffled, outwitted, undone, he felt that unless he could divert Anthony from his purpose, not only was Ada lost to him for ever, but even if his liberty were not endangered, and he escaped all punishment for the abduction of Lady Fathom's child, and for stabbing her brother, still his character was blasted, his prospects ruined, since to avoid being cut by every officer in his regiment, he must inevitably sell out, and that, just when the promotion he had for years expected was about to be his.

After remaining for some time silent, he turned to Anthony, and said,—“Brother, you were wont to have a kind heart and a forgiving

spirit It is useless to deny that you can ruin me. A terrible revenge is in your power, but it were nobler to forgive. What can it avail you, to ruin your father's son?—to drive him to some act of desperation, which, if you are, as you were once, a believer in what priests tell us, will prolong your vengeance, and his torments through eternity. Brother, you cannot wish to do so ! But listen. Be merciful this once ! Let me plead my cause with Lady Fathom, you know not—you can never know how I love, how I worship that woman, and how I have watched and planned, and panted for this hour. Let me but plead my cause with her, and do not disgrace me before her, by taxing me with those deeds I did from my insane passion for her, and I swear to you, brother, I will share with you, as I would have done at first, would you have listened to me, the fortune of our uncle, and I myself will peril all I possess, to convey you to a place of safety. Brother, I implore you, be merciful !”

And Gaspar Smiley wept ! the cold, proud, heartless Calculator knelt and wept.

“No, no!” said Anthony, rousing himself, after a moment in which he seemed about to relent, “I am not so weak, so infirm of purpose, so mere a shuttlecock. What would Marian say?—Marian, whom you so heartlessly seduced, so cruelly abandoned, and through whom the luxury of vengeance is in my power now. Through you, she is a wretch, through you I have known crime and want and misery in every shape, been familiar with prisons, with the galleys, and now brave the scaffold which awaits me, for this long coveted revenge. And shall I, after all, be such a woman as to yield to tears and bent knees? No, no! Come, come! or go alone.”

As he spoke, Gaspar’s groom called from the outer room,—“Sir! are you there? Sir Noah and Lady Fatbom are below, they are come to see Captain Fitzopal, whom they understood to be dangerously ill; what shall I say, sir?”

“Say I will wait on them directly,” replied Major Smiley.

“Ha ! ha . ha !” laughed Anthony. “Capital, capital ! a better sell I never knew ! the lady brings her husband to the rendezvous ! Come, let us go and welcome them ! Ha, ha !” he said, “what have we here ? they have tracked, they have discovered me !”

Gaspar started to his feet, a gleam of hope shot through his heart, a dark figure appeared at the window—another and another ! The light of a lanthorn revealed a ladder by which they had ascended, and betrayed that they were officers of justice in pursuit of Anthony Smiley.

Anthony flung himself, knife in hand, on the first who entered the room, and would probably have stabbed and hurled him from the window, but for Gaspar, who seeing in this arrest, rescue for himself, held back his brother’s arms, and thus he was easily overpowered and secured. Choking with passion, and incoherent from the violence of his emotions, Anthony Smiley breathed forth curse upon curse. “Through you, then, I am taken at last,” he said ; “through you

I shall perish on the scaffold, just as I was going to act like a fool, and to believe in and forgive you ; but mark me, by every fiend in hell, I will be revenged yet, and tears of blood should not divert me from that vengeance now !”

“ Come, come !” said one of the officers, “ none of your jaw. It’s no fault of the gentleman’s you’re taken, we’ve been on the look-out for you long enough. Come along, stir your stumps.” But the violence of his emotion had ended in a fit, and he was dragged insensible to a post-chaise ; Major Smiley having politely offered refreshments to the chief policeman, and given him to understand that he had just discovered the convict in a closet, armed with a knife, when their providential arrival probably saved his life.

“ He was just stipulating for all I possess in the house, when you arrested him,” said Major Smiley. “ For what crime have you a warrant against him ? from his language he appears to me to be insane.”

" Ah, that's an old trick, but it won't do ; he stabbed a policeman in the discharge of his duty, and I hope he'll be made an example of."

" But what crime was he committing when the policeman interfered with him ?"

" He was behaving in a disorderly way in the streets. Policeman Johnson, K division, collared him, and the next moment fell, stabbed to the heart. I believe he was a little in liquor, but had he been very drunk he couldn't have effected his escape. It'll go hard with him I believe, and it's well it should. Ours is a hard trade at any time, but when we've assassins to deal with, unless they're made an example of, we're as good as dead men."

By this time, Major Smiley had shown the officer into the dining-room, and poured him out a glass of brandy, which having swallowed, he with many thanks hurried to the post-chaise, and set off with the two policemen and Anthony Smiley, who continued apparently insensible.

CHAPTER XV.

AMAZED and delighted at what seemed to him to be an almost providential deliverance from utter ruin and the most blasting disgrace, Major Smiley stood for a few minutes irresolute as to what tale he should invent on the spur of the moment, to explain to Sir Noah and Lady Fathom, not merely Fitzopal's letter and his absence, but also his own urgent note so recently dispatched.

Major Smiley was in such high spirits at his own unexpected rescue, that the disappointment with regard to Ada, which would have maddened him before now, scarcely ruffled his buoy-

ant spirit. "*Ce qui est remis, n'est pas perdu,*" said the odious deceiver to himself, as, armed with lies, and assumed concern, he prepared to meet his guests. "Adolphus safe off, the coast is clear, perhaps little Ada's next visit to Cliff-house may be confessedly and solely on account of her adoring Gaspar."

He found Lady Fathom in great alarm, pale, in tears, and Sir Noah vainly striving to comfort her; the cunning silence of Joseph, whose motto was, "least said soonest mended," the delay of Major Smiley, and the mysterious commotion they had heard in the house, had led them to suppose some horrible catastrophe had indeed occurred; and the hypocritical concern of Major Smiley's face, so well confirmed this notion, that Ada, when she saw him, uttered scream upon scream, and threw herself almost lifeless into her husband's arms.

It was some time before she was calm enough to listen to anything but her own fears, with which she had so completely imbued the credu-

lous and tender-hearted Sir Noah, that believing Adolphus dead, he was sobbing like a child. At length, however, Major Smiley made them understand that their grief was premature.

“Does he live, then?” shrieked Ada, starting to her feet.

“He does!”

“Thank Heaven for that!” said poor Sir Noah, wiping his eyes! “Poor boy! I feared it was all over!”

“Where is he?” asked Ada; “let us go to him at once.”

“He is not here,—it was my melancholy duty to have him removed; his frenzy had reached such a height, that I could not manage him. I believe he had resolved on suicide, and as far as I could gather from his incoherent language, had fixed on this night for the termination of his existence. His wish to see your ladyship, was the only one he expressed, and prompted me to take the liberty of begging you to visit him. He seemed to have something on his

mind, which he wished to communicate to you alone."

"And whither have they taken him?" asked Ada, weeping.

"Ah! that is the saddest and the strangest part of my story. You know, perhaps, that poor Fitzopal has been for some time in embarrassed circumstances,—very much so indeed."

"No, I had no idea of it!" said Ada.

"Nor I," added Sir Noah, "or my purse would have been at his command."

"Poor fellow! he probably was aware of that, and therefore resolved to keep his distresses to himself; but the fact is, for some months he has led the life of a hunted hare. I did all I could for him; but I, alas! am not a wealthy man. Well, just an hour before Dr. Thong was to be here, to convey our poor friend to his private asylum for the insane, he was arrested at the suit of Solomon and Levi, two money-lenders. Some scoundrel's attorney, had sworn poor Fitzopal was going

abroad, and procured in consequence a writ of *capias*. I did my best, but they would hear nothing—pretended to look on the mental disorder of our poor friend as a *ruse* to escape justice—and have carried him off. However, they are aware of his state; they have an insane ward, and I have no doubt that this real misfortune, driving away his imaginary ones, will effect his cure. After all, his disease is merely a morbid anxiety about his affairs—a disgust of life which some crosses have rendered odious to him; and a melancholia which he has rather encouraged than struggled against; sad as the recent event is, it is of all things the most likely to rouse him; and I should not be surprised to hear he had effected his escape, and recovered his reason.”

“But you will go to him, I hope,” said Ada.

“And tell him,” said Sir Noah, “that I shall rejoice to be his banker in this difficulty; any assistance he requires I shall be happy to afford; and pray tell him, that neither Lady

Fathom nor myself will feel at ease about him, till we hear from himself, that both his melancholy, and the difficulties which caused it, have vanished; and now come, dearest Ada, bad as this is, it is a trifle compared to the horrible catastrophe we anticipated."

"Then," said Major Smiley, who did not at all like having his time and attentions thus disposed of when he had intended devoting them to Ada, — "Then, when I have repeated your generous offer, and seen to Fitzopal's comfort and safety, I, as I must return to Brighton on business of my own, will do myself the honour of letting you know the result of this event. If it has the effect I anticipate, it will be the happiest thing that could have befallen poor Fitzopal. In short, you know of course that he has a very fair chance of an heiress with half-a-million, but you do not know perhaps that he has seen her, captivated her affections, and that it rests with himself to secure her hand. As he does not love or admire her, and as I fear some attachment

or entanglement elsewhere—the struggle between interest and antipathy has helped to upset him ; but now that he is fairly driven to it, I hope we shall soon receive cards and cake, and see Fitzopal with new equipage, new liveries, and a new spirit, driving a belle brunette in white muslin and orange-flowers. He is such a mercurial fellow, I think he is sure to rally soon, and be a very happy man, with a wife and a fortune. His feelings, poor fellow, are very quick, but I hope neither very deep nor very lasting, a peculiarity I envy him,” said the Major, with a glance and a sigh which were quite lost on Ada, whose own feelings, recently so terribly wrought up to the expectation of some dreadful catastrophe, were, though immensely relieved, not a little outraged by this new view of Fitzopal’s affairs, and the acquaintance, and even intimacy with the heiress, which he had so artfully concealed. Ada felt, she scarce knew how or why, that the whole affair had descended suddenly from the sublime to the ridiculous ; she did not

see through the whole, she did not even suspect a tythe of the truth, but yet she had a sort of unpleasant semi-consciousness of having been duped and played upon, and though she was too thoroughly a woman to betray this suspicion to the Major, or to confine it to Sir Noah, yet there was a something in her tone, her look, and her manner, Major Smiley had not remarked before, and which very much diminished the sanguine hopes he had so recently indulged in.

Major Smiley, in consequence, refrained from proposing, as he had half planned, seeing the Fathoms home, and inviting himself to supper. He remained behind, alternately to rejoice in his wonderful escape from disgrace and ruin, and to curse the fate which compelled him to pretend, at least, to go on a mission of kindness to Fitzopal, thus rendering it impossible for him to devote himself to Ada. And Ada, as she returned from what she could not but feel to be something like what schoolboys call a fool's errand, as Sir Noah throwing his kind arm round her

rejoiced in the innocence of his simple heart, that all was well,—Ada inwardly recorded a vow —never to take an important step in the path of life without consulting him, and felt that the whole of this intricate and mysterious affair might, had she ventured alone to Cliff-house, have worn a different aspect and was indeed a lesson not easily forgotten, and a Warning to Wives, not to be despised.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE next day was the long-looked for, joyful day, when poor Janet was to go in search of her darling boy. In the exciting anticipation of so soon embracing him, she could not close her eyes; hour after hour she lay awake, figuring to herself the delight of having him again with her, of knowing him safe and well, of being able every hour of every day, and of every night too, to clasp him to her bosom, and to assure herself of his welfare.

The cold and heartless inconstancy of Major Smiley, the death of her poor mother, the insanity of her father, and the coldness of her

sister, together with her own consciousness of disgrace, and the scorn of all early friends, had so completely isolated poor Janet, and so tended to centre all her hopes and all her affections in her boy, that her devotion partook of the passionate idolatry of love, while it was fraught, too, with all the anxious and watchful tenderness of maternity. It was no small conquest over all that was selfish in her affection for her child, which had induced Ada to yield to Major Smiley's wishes, and send him from her. In parting with her little Gaspar, poor Janet parted with everything that charmed, soothed, or delighted her. But she knew that poor fare, and a close London room, were ruin to her darling's constitution, and that the country, good milk, and the society of other children, would probably repair the evil his former mode of life had brought upon his constitution. Then, too, though every day she felt less and less anxious for her own sake, to link her fate with Major Smiley's—for every day she saw him

more and more as he really was, cold, sensual, cruel, and calculating; yet the more she saw of the world, the more did she dread the effect it would have some day on her boy's peace, and his opinion of her, when he learnt she was a mother, but not a wife; and little as seemed the hope of Major Smiley's marrying her, yet as he had held out the probability of such an event to induce her obedience, when he thought her stay with Ada might farther his views, she was resolved not by any obstinacy or offence of her own to embitter him against her, and lessen her chance of recovering some degree of respectability in the eyes of the world, and one day in those of her son. But none but a mother—a mother so isolated, so forlorn, so forsaken as poor Janet, could estimate the sacrifice it was to her to part with her child. The anxious days, the sleepless nights, the vague presentiments of evil, the dreams, offspring of a mind disturbed, the prayers, the longings and the tears!——but it is over now—she is going

wild with joy, laden with long-hoarded treasures ! her heart feels light as ere she had known sin or sorrow, and long before the train started, Janet was at the station. The very day before Janet had heard from Mrs. Koddle, that her darling was in perfect health ; and she, the lost, the forsaken, the betrayed—the child of sorrow, and alas of guilt—one who had hastened, if not caused her mother's death, and her father's madness—she felt a rapture she had ill-deserved to feel, and looked in bright and gladsome beauty ; the Janet of other days.

Arrived in London, Janet was all anxiety to secure her luggage, which was almost all composed of things for her boy, and then to take a cab to Turnham Green, where she was to spend Sunday with him, and take him to Brighton on Monday. It was while anxiously pointing out to one of the Mile-end porters, her own box, amongst the crowd of carpet-bags, trunks, and portmanteaus, that Janet felt her arm touched, and looking hastily round, she saw her old lover,

the Rev. Peter McHowler, and on his arm, his bride—her own sister Alice!——“ Oh, Alice! dearest Alice!” cried Janet, bursting into tears, as the auld lang syne, fraught with the memory of her mother, and a thousand other reminiscences, rushed across her heart, “ how glad I am to see you, my own darling sister!” And Janet, forgetting at that moment the dreadful barrier which divides even the sister who has fallen, from her who has not, and the distance between the wedded wife and the abandoned mistress, threw her arms round Alice, and sobbed aloud. But Alice, or rather Mrs. McHowler, did not respond with any sisterly warmth to this passionate embrace. She did not actually shake poor Janet off, but she coldly said, “ We are come fra the north to seek you, Janet, to save a brand fra the burning, to restore a lost sheep to the fauld; but let us step into the station, for this place is ower public for sic a meeting, after sic a parting.”

“ You are right, Alice,” said the Rev. Peter,

“we will go into the waiting-room for a few minutes, and then we will e'en take Janet wi' us to our present quarters ; and though we canna kill the fatted calf, yet will we make merry at our pleasant meal, for the sister that was lost, is found !”

So saying, Mr. McHowler led his wife and Janet into the waiting-room, and then Janet drying her eyes, and collecting her thoughts, first noticed the wondrous change two years had made in Alice. From a very slight, fair, slip of a girl, with large, timid blue eyes, lint-white locks, anever-varying complexion, and the very shyest of looks and of manners, Alice had ripened into a tall, stately, reserved, and very beautiful woman, with a something self-possessed, stern, and even prim in her air and manner. Her dress, excessively plain and neat, though rich of its kind, was almost affectedly matronlike in its total absence of all usual ornament. Her dress, of a grey and very fine French Merino, though full in the skirt, was

perfectly plain in the bodice and sleeves, and fitted exactly to her fine shape, her slender waist, and rounded bust and arms. A small and perfectly plain cambric collar of snowy white, matched a pair of cuffs of the same material ; her hair was simply braided under a little net cap, and a close small straw bonnet, tied with a bit of white ribbon, completed her attire, save only a pair of spotless kid gloves, very neat black shoes, and white stockings without sandals, and a scarf of Macauley tartan of the darkest green and blue.

“Certainly this dress, quaint and quaker-like as it was, set off by its neatness and cleanliness, the youthful bloom and remarkable beauty of the young bride ; and Janet could hardly recognise in the cold austerity of demeanour, and severe simplicity of dress, the sister who had been so wild and shy, and warm in manner, and so childishly fond of finery in dress ; a girl so imitative and so devoted, that in all things she took her tone from her elder sister, and would fly .

to do her bidding, listen to her as to an oracle, and wait on her like a slave! one whose love for her had been so clinging, so confiding, and so child-like, that Janet had felt sure that wherever Alice dwelt, there she was remembered with love and (in spite of her errors,) with reverence. Poor Janet! she forgot that from a pattern and a model, she had sunk into a warning and a bye-word. The very softness, and imitative, dependent nature of Alice's mind, which in earlier days had made her cling to, and mould herself on Janet, had caused her easily to form other ties, and receive other impressions when she saw Janet no more; and when, too, she saw the ruin Janet had wrought, and heard her name, ever coupled with sin and sorrow.

After the death of her mother, Alice had spent much of her time with her aunt, Miss Macauley, of Muir-house; and there, malleable and impressionable, under the influence of that stern spinster and her sterner maid, and that of the Reverend Peter, who soon trans-

ferred his love and his attentions to the beautiful and docile Alice, he had become an ultra Calvinist in her religious views, and a rigid Puritan in dress, manners, and conduct. After the first joy at again embracing her sister, Janet felt painfully conscious of the alteration in Alice, and of the distance between them. She timidly asked after her father, and Peter McHowler replied,—“The auld leaven of pride and malice is na’ quite put awa’; yet, the evil spirits still at times make his heart their dwelling place, but by prayer and fasting he has cast mony out. Eh, sirs, but there were mony, mony to cast. However, he mends daily, Janet Macauley. He needeth now little or na’ restraint, and I dinna despair o’ seeing him ance mair in his ain pulpit, mair worthy o’ his high office than in the auld days, before shame and sorrow turned his puir brain. But greet na, greet na, lassie, wha’s done canna be undone; and perhaps ye were, by yer sin, mad an instrument to humble the haughty speerit that ill

became a meenester o' the Kirk ; and now, Alice wife, tell your sister our plans concerning her, while I gang and ca' a coach to tak us a' to our temporary hame."

So saying, the Reverend Peter left the sisters alone, and then Alice said,—“ We had found out you were at Brighton, Janet, and the gude man and mysel' were intending to gang down there by the next train, when we saw you amang the passengers. We are come fra' our dear and peacefu' hame, into this vain, sinfu', and crowded city, to tak you bock wi' us to your ain country, and your ain people, on ane condition ;—you must be content to part for aye wi' the unhappy evidence o' your sin and your shame, sister,—the child o' that son o' Belial and o' corruption, wha led you fra' the paths o' piety and peace, into the bonds o' iniquity and the slough of despond. But dinna greet, and dinna let your anger mak yer cheek by turns sae red and sae white. The gude mon

wills na that the bairn perish. He has interest wi' a charitable asylum, where he will be reared humbly, as becomes his birth and hopes, but in the fear of God and the duties of men. There, if it please God to spare him, he will live in peace, till he is auld eno' to earn his livelihood honestly; and after lang repentance and lang suffering, who can tell but what you may still become the honest wife of some gude man, and atone by a life o' pious usefulness, for the errors o' your youth, and the sorrows you have caused us a'?"

Janet had been for some time striving how to express the violent emotions, this, to her thinking, insolent and heartless speech called forth. The tears had rushed to her eyes, and her cheek, as Alice had remarked, had varied from burning red to ghastly white; but she had let Alice finish her speech without interruption, and upon her drawing herself up in the pride of wisdom and virtue, in her haughty and

conditional patronage of her fallen sister, she said, "Of course, Janet, ye can mak but ane answer to this kind offer of my gude mon, and ye will merit his protection by your penitence."

"True, Alice," said Janet, rising and draw herself up with an injured dignity, which for a moment abashed her sister,—“ True, there is but one answer to be made to the proposal, which, well-meant perhaps by your husband, who owes me no good-will of course, comes with a cold and heartless insolence from the lips of a sister, to whom I was for so many years a second mother. Know, Alice, that, fallen as I am, I have been unfortunate, but not guilty of anything in my mind half so base as your cruel contempt, expressed in your bitter words, and your heartless wish that I should forsake the child, whose father being what you have described, has no parent to love, cherish, or comfort it, but myself. I have suffered much, Alice, since my sad, my irremediable, but my unintentional

fall—much mental, much bodily misery ; but the most bitter mortification I have ever known, I owe to you. Farewell, Alice ! we meet perhaps no more on earth. I shall not seek you, nor you me, when I tell you that wherever I go, the evidence of my sin and shame, as you so gently call him, goes with me. If you are ever a mother yourself, Alice, you will understand my scorn of your proposal, my indignant rejection of your harsh and heartless conditions ; and if ever you are in sorrow—if, in spite of all that seems so fair and smiling now, disgrace or ruin come upon you, you will remember with the late remorse of love, the sister whose cup of bitterness you have filled to overflowing, and who, fallen as she is, would rather be the suffering Janet than the heartless Alice. Farewell !” So saying, Janet hastened from her sister’s presence, and instantly hailing a cab, drove off to Turnham Green ; and Alice, who had never been accustomed to act for herself, and who had

said merely what her husband had dictated, felt very ill-at-ease, and knew not what to do or to think until the return of the Reverend Peter.

CHAPTER XVI.

JANET's mortification and distress gave way to hope and even rapture, when the fresh country air, the green trees, and the occasional glimpses of the country, reminded her that she was drawing near her child's abode; and when they stopped at the gate of the pretty little garden which fronted Mrs. Koddle's neat white cottage, the young mother's knees shook, while her hands trembled so violently that she could hardly open her purse to pay the driver. As no one answered the bell, Janet presumed the children were out walking; and desiring the driver to carry her box to the house-door, and put it

down under the portico, she raised the latch of the door, and stood in the passage. No one appearing, Janet ran up a few steps and opened the door of the front sitting-room, where her child had usually been brought to her.

The shutters were partly closed, and coming suddenly out of the broad mid-day glare, Janet for a moment could not distinguish objects ; but a horrible chill stole over her heart, and her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth, for in the middle of the room, on a table, stood what looked frightfully like a little coffin ; another burning gaze convinced her it was indeed a shell. It was covered with a white sheet, and a sickly smell of rue, rosemary, southernwood, and vinegar, convinced Janet that little coffin was tenanted. A horrible terror, a dreadful presentiment crossed her mind ; but no ! no ! she had heard of *his* being in perfect health the day before she set out, there were many other children in the same house. It was too frightful ! it could not be ! She rushed forward, for suspense was

maddening. She plucked away the cloth that covered the little corpse—she gazed with burning eyeballs—lips apart, and a cold sweat coming out upon her brow ; her hands closed and unclosed convulsively—a spasm in her throat stifled a cry—the cry of a broken spirit, and a bursting heart. Poor, poor Janet ! it was her child !

Nature could not endure the agony of such a moment long, and heavily and senseless the wretched one fell to the ground. One glance had sufficed the mother. Changed ! how changed ! yet still the same, her all, her darling lay ! How beautiful is death in infancy ! how marble-like the little angel looked, how softly sealed those pure white lids, with their dark fringes resting on the soft shades of blue and violet, which blending with no rose upon the cheek, told the sad tale, that what looked else so like soft sleep, was stern, remorseless death. His beautiful and abundant curls of golden flax fell upon his broad white shoulders and his noble chest, and

shaded the round white brow, "on which the violet vein, wandering, leaves a tender stain."

But this was all, and luckily the wretched mother saw at first, no more than this, or frenzy might have taken the place of the merciful swoon which for a few minutes cheated her of her anguish !

She had been perhaps ten minutes lifeless on the floor, when the old woman, whose duty it was to watch the little corpse, and who had stolen away in search of "summut of a drop of comfort," came in, and seeing the sheet withdrawn from the corpse, she was almost afraid to approach the coffin, believing in her own mind, that rats, of which she had a superstitious dread, and of which she knew the house was full, had got at the body in her absence, when a low moan made her look round again, and she perceived poor Janet senseless on the floor.

The truth flashed across her mind in a moment. She knew the poor child's mother was expected in the evening, and as she looked

on the ghastly pallor of that face, and the lifeless form before her, the old woman felt that she gazed on that mother.

She hobbled off in search of Mrs. Koddle, who, with a party of neighbours, was consoling herself with tea and spirits, and who, attended by several other women, hastened to the room where Janet lay.

Their unwelcome assistance, their salts, vinegar, cold water, and fresh air, too soon, alas! brought back poor Janet to misery and herself. As consciousness returned to her mind, violent hysterics came on, passionate floods of tears, heart-rending bewailings, and bitter reproaches. These last called forth the powers of Mrs. Koddle's voluble tongue, and the whole horrible truth rushed on the mother's mind. "Why, blessed goodness gracious from heaven!" she cried, putting her apron to her eyes, "to go for to blame me, as is more than a mother to all the blessed critturs, and to that poor dear little soul in particular, as the neighbours can tell ee; if

he'd been my own ten times over, I couldn't have made more on him. It was yesterday morning, lawkee me, it do seem like a dream I said says I, ' Well, when Mrs. Macauley comes I shall expect a handsome present for my care of that blessed hangil,' for there he stood, bolt upright, a noble crittur, with his eyes as black as sloes, and as bright as stars, his hair a-curling for all the world like a wax doll's, and as for red and white, roses and lilies was a joke to him. I said, as he come a hugging and a kissing of me,—' Dod oo bess oo, oo is too beautiful for this here wale of tears,' and I gived him a cake, and warned him not to go anighst the fire, on no acqueont, while I just stepped in next door, to borrow the newspaper. Well, I'd hardly a-turned my back when I heard the horriddest screams, not only from little Gaspar, but all the childer, and a-rushing back, fit to break my neck, I seed him all in a blaze. Well, I was took'd so bad of my inside, I couldn't stir, but Mrs. Turner, who'd a-runned out, hearing the

noise, caught up the door-mat, threw the blessed baby down, and 'stinguished the devouring helement; but though it pleased God to spare his dear, blessed, beautiful face, his poor body was so burnt, the doctor gave no hopes, and in two hours he was out of his misery. But even the coroner's quest, as has sat upon the body, didn't go for to blame me much, seeing I'd only just turned my back, after ordering him special not to go anighst the fire, and begging Susan, who was in the back kitchen, to give an eye to em.

“ It seems, he'd seen me toasting a cake at breakfast, and being always up to mischief, and a-copying after me, a blessed hangill, he'd stuck his cake on a bit o'stick to toast it, when the draught from the open door drew his pinafore between the bars, and in a moment he was in a blaze. A verdict o' accidental death was returned, which is a great satisfaction and comfort to my spirits; but I've been uncommon bad ever since it happened, and when my poor

blessed narves will recover this shock, I'm sure I can't pretend to say."

"Oh God! oh God! my poor, poor child!" groaned Janet, crawling to his coffin, and resting her throbbing brow beside his cold, still form.

"Now don't ee take on, ma'am, more than ee can help! take pattern by me; if I war to give way, I believe I'd soon folly that blessed crittur. But man is borned to sorrow as the sparks flies upards, and its our duty to submit, and to bear up against our troubles. Now, do ee take a cup o' tea wi a bit o' buttered toast, and jist one spoonful o' rum; you've no idea how it will comfort your poor inside. Grief's unkimmon dry, and there aint nothing like a cup o' tea and a drap o' spirit. Now do ee, do ee now!" and she drew near Janet, and pulled her by the arm.

Janet turned almost fiercely round, and the woman was startled at the ghastly pallor of her face, and the burning fire of her eyes; wild

and bloodshot, they, added to a light foam on her black and parched lips, and the scorching grasp of her hand as she snatched Mrs. Koddle's fat arm, gave that matron a horrible fear that the wretched mother was going mad. This fear was confirmed, when, pushing her violently away, Janet, in a voice of wild despair, exclaimed,—“Go, woman, go ! unless you would tempt me to kill you ; to your base carelessness I owe the loss of all that made life dear, or even bearable. Come not to me—me, the maddened, the bereaved, the desolate, with your vile cant of love and care ; there, is the proof of your watchful and motherly devotion to the helpless ones confided to you ! Look at him, the beautiful ! the beloved ! the lost ! think of his agonies—of mine, and then boast on, cant on, if you can ! but now, as the sight of you, one and all, maddens me ! go ! leave me to the one miserable solace left me—the luxury of watching him alone ! go !—it will release you all—I want no food, I want no canting voices—no crocodile

tears !—I want to be alone with my God, my anguish, and my child !”

Mrs. Koddle, not a little offended and alarmed at this speech, and the menacing voice and gesture which accompanied it, slunk away, followed by all the other women, including the old crone whose duty it had been to watch the little corpse. They all returned to their tea, their spirits, their buttered toast and their muffins, and as Mrs. Koddle was the founder of this feast, they all eagerly and coaxingly condoled with her, on the injustice, the ingratitude, and the ill-usage of Mrs. Macaulay, observing, that the woman must be out of her mind, to set upon a dear, blessed, motherly crittur, who warnt not the leastest bit to blame—who'd been more than a mother to the poor little departed hangill, and whose sufferings might be seed in her own blessed face, though she did bear it like a christian.

CHAPTER XVII.

AND while these women canted and flattered Mrs. Koddle, and drank her tea and her rum, and devoured piles of buttered toast and muffins and crumpets, (a species of festival with which such people generally welcome Death,) what a watch was poor Janet's by her darling's little coffin ! Fits of wild and frenzied anguish succeeded to gloomy hours of passive despair, which yielded in their turn to bursts of tenderness and tears. A cup of tea and a plate of toast had been placed on a chair near the wretched mourner, by the old crone, who, however, ventured not to utter a word which should induce Janet to raise the face then

buried in the sheet that covered the little coffin. All Mrs. Koddle's friends united to praise the blessed Christian spirit that induced her to send any comfort to such a violent, thankless, ill-disposed woman; and Mrs. Koddle drank in the praises and the spirits so freely, that, under the pretence of not being able to bear up any longer against her feelings, she was helped to bed. There the wretched cause of all this anguish, snored away that night, which poor Janet spent in prayer and fasting, in tears, and sometimes—alas for human weakness! in shrieks and groans of anguish; one rushlight, brought in by the old nurse, shedding its dim light on the still and placid features of the little mourned one, and on the blistered cheeks, the bloodshot eyes, and the convulsed countenance of the desolate mourner. Ah, during that dreadful watch, how often rose to poor Janet's lips, the curses she yet struggled not to breathe,—the curses on him, the heartless seducer of her innocence, the cruel father of her lost boy, to whose selfish

and tyrannical caprice it was owing, that she had not been with her darling in time to save him from his horrible and torturing death. Yes, but for the odious Gaspar Smiley's iniquitous plans, which compelled Janet to postpone her journey for a whole day, her boy would have been safe in her arms at the very time, death in its most frightful shape was hovering near him. Alas, as this thought would force itself on the mother's mind, she was indeed tempted to curse him and to die; but no, no,—as yet Janet was not mad, and a glance at her poor boy in his still and holy beauty, sent softer emotions to her heart, and instead of an impious curse, she sunk on her knees, and cried, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us, O Lord!"

In the manner we have (vainly, perhaps) attempted to describe, Janet passed the first night, and the next long day; but the second night, the worst the bereaved have to bear, brought on a violent and delirious grief, which

justified the people about her, in forcibly removing her from her darling's coffin, and putting her under temporary restraint.

It was in the middle of that second night, that two men, (cold, callous, brutal-looking men,) smelling of spirits, and joking and laughing, came into the "venerable presence of misery," to screw and solder down the little coffin, and shut for ever from poor Janet's eyes, all on earth they loved to look upon.

These horrid fellows, the lowest class of undertakers, heedless of Janet, whom they looked upon merely as an ordinary watcher by the corpse, began to romp with each other with the tools of their sad trade, and pelt each other with the flowers and herbs strewn over the body; and one villain, wrapping himself up in the sheet, began to personify a ghost, while the other, having heated one of his tools at a little charcoal fire they had brought with them, proposed, either in brutal earnest or wanton sport, to leave their mark (as they had so often

done before) on the fair forehead of the little corpse.

It is well known that these fellows, rendered callous and brutal by their trade, do often, if not watched, take a sort of savage delight in thus disfiguring the calm features, so dear, so sacred to some mourner or mourners, who weeping in helpless anguish, never dream of a desecration they would die to prevent; and it is one reason why the tedious and heartrending process of screwing and soldering down the coffin-lid should be closely watched by some one of whom these miscreants stand in awe. On the present occasion, elevated by liquor, they were very much disposed to engage in a kind of romping bout, the young and very pretty woman, whom they found watching the body, instead of the old hags generally so employed; and none of their antics having called forth a word or a smile, the most brutal-looking drew near the still and beautiful face of the dead child, and whether intending really to brand it, or only to arouse

the watcher, and startle her, we know not ; but seeing his horrible movement, Janet seized his arm with a wild shriek, and wresting the tool red-hot at one end, from his vile grasp, she threw it out of the open window.

Her violent and successive screams alarmed, not only the people of the house, but the police, who happened to be passing at the time ; and in a minute the room was filled. So sudden had been the entrance, that one of these horrid fellows had still around him the sheet he had put on in sport ; and this circumstance was so lucky, that it corroborated to the mind of a very respectable and humane policeman, the poor mother's tale of the outrage on her dead child, which she had just prevented, and drew a severe rebuke, and a threat of exposure and punishment from the policeman. Luckily for poor Janet, this policeman had seen better days, and was a father, who had lost his wife and only child. He felt deeply for the poor and forlorn young creature, whose anguish was so legibly written

on her ghastly features. He knew enough of the race of undertakers' men to believe the harrowing account poor Janet gave, and speaking to her in the kindest and most sensible and sympathising manner, he promised her, if she would not impede these men in the discharge of a necessary duty, he himself would remain with her till the coffin was screwed down, and the little corpse secured from all further outrage.

Janet, sensible of his kindness, though not quite understanding his words, promised to do as he wished ; and the rest of the people retired, and Janet and the policeman were left alone with the undertakers and the little body.

But poor Janet had overrated her own strength ; when she saw these wretches about to screw down the dreadful lid over that form, and hide for ever from her eyes the darling of her soul, she lost all self-restraint, all consciousness of right and wrong. Delirium gave her a strength amazing in so slight and fragile a creature, and to save her from the brutal hands

of the undertakers, the policeman summoned the woman of the house to assist him to restrain her, being fully determined to fulfil his promise, and see the coffin secured, and the little corpse safe from all further outrage ; for he read in the vile eyes of these men, what convinced him, that were he to leave the room before their task was done, they would wreak their brutal vengeance, and glut their loathsome malice, on the little cherub, whose wasting and placid beauty would have softened any hearts but theirs.

Poor, poor Janet ! as she saw the terrible work proceed, her grief became so violent and so unmanageable, that Mrs. Koddle, advised by the policeman, went in search of a medical man and a straight waistcoat. These measures seemed harsh, but they were the most merciful. The medical man having secured her against the possibility of injuring herself or others, had her placed in a bed, where a strong opiate acting on nerves already worn out with watching and with misery, threw her into a deep and death-

like sleep, from which it would have been a mercy had she never waked; but from which she did wake, at the end of four-and-twenty hours, unconscious at first of the terrible past; and as it slowly dawned upon her mind, meeting it with a deep and settled melancholy, but with no violent emotion, no frenzied evidence of despair, which could warrant her being any longer treated as insane.

Indeed, so composed, so quiet, so subdued was the demeanor of poor Janet, that when the doctor came, he ordered all restraint to be removed; and as he was the person who had attended her child in its dying moments, he patiently and kindly answered the poor mother's minute enquiries about its sufferings. With a sort of pious fraud, he endeavoured to convince her that it had felt little or no pain, adducing in support of his assertion, what Janet recalled as he spoke, the beautiful placidity of its countenance after death.

He left Janet to prepare, as well as the short

time she had before her would allow, for attending the funeral of her child,—a trial of her fortitude which the kind doctor opposed at first, but yielded to, when he saw how entirely she was bent upon doing so.

Janet had one day and a half before her, to prepare mourning for this sad ceremony; and so gentle, so amiable, and so composed did she seem now in her behaviour to Mrs. Koddle, and the other women of the house, that they readily agreed to do their utmost to help her to equip herself for this last tribute of love and grief. They purchased for her, at her request, the articles she required, and sat with her in the little room where the coffin stood, helping her to make the necessary articles. At their request, she took a little tea and dry toast, and though she seldom spoke, and sighed heavily and often, she won upon them all, by her gentle voice and soft murmurs, and even Mrs. Koddle freely forgave, in consideration of her present kindness, the violence of her conduct and language at

first. By the morning of the funeral, all was ready, and the young mother, with her marble pallor, her intense but tearless grief, and her deep mourning, looked the very incarnation of woe, and excited an universal pity.

She leant on the arm of Mrs. Koddle, who, in her best suit of well-preserved widow's weeds, and with a handkerchief pompously large and white, exhibited a grief as noisy and violent as poor Janet's was silent and deep. The young mother scarcely raised her eyes or her head during the solemn service, and only once did a stifled cry of anguish escape her, and that was when the dust rattled on the coffin-lid. After the ceremony she went quietly back to Mrs. Koddle's, where preparations for a funeral tea-party had been made on a grand scale. No pressing could induce poor Janet, whom they had reckoned on as the lion of the party, to be present. She said she wished to lie down for an hour or two, before taking her leave, and returning to her friends. She did retire, but not to

lie down, for she spent the time in writing to Lady Fathom. Mrs. Koddle herself brought her up a cup of tea, and would not leave her till she had taken that and a bit of toast, and then Janet paid her what was owing for the poor child's board and funeral expenses. She begged Mrs. Koddle to take charge of her trunk and of her infant's clothes, till she should be able to send for them, and then observing that she would walk to a coach-stand, and wished to slip quietly away, she forced herself to shake hands with Mrs. Koddle, and hurried from the house. She bent her steps to the churchyard, where her darling was buried, and sitting down beside the new-made grave, she remained wrapped in silent, tearless woe, unmarked by any one, and concealed by a spreading yew-tree, till the long summer evening had darkened into night, and a few stars came out, cold and bright, in the deep blue heavens.

When all was dim and hushed and chill around her, a thousand vague and superstitious

fears began to haunt her mind ; now on a white monument, still faintly visible, she fancied she saw her mother beckoning her ; now the earth on her darling's form seemed to move and rise beside her. The soft summer breeze playing through the yew and cypress trees, sounded to her ear like human groans, and after throwing herself prostrate on her infant's little grave for a few minutes, and there giving vent to the pent-up anguish of many hours, she cried, " Mother, I come ! My darling, I come ! " and rising hastily, she rushed out of the churchyard, and sped along the deserted road like one pursued. On, on rushed the wretched Janet, murmuring ever and anon to herself,— " Mother, I come ! My child, I come ! " A few people looked after her, in the " darkness visible," as she hurried on her way, and one bold, insolent profligate, seizing her arm, insulted her with words of indecent and disgusting familiarity ; but she broke from him, and passed on more rapidly than before—till——

Where the lamps quiver,
Far down by the river,
 With many a light,
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood with amazement,
 Houseless at night.

The cold wind of night
Made her tremble and shiver,
But not the darkarch
 Or the black flowing river,
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery
 Swift to be hurled,
Anywhere, anywhere,
 Out of the world !

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
 The swift river ran.
Over the brink of it,
Muse on it, think of it,
Dissolute man.
Lave in it, drink of it
 Then, if you can !

The gifted and lamented poet, Hood, has thus
in a few graphic lines recorded a catastrophe such

as poor Janet's, but in language which for descriptive beauty and power is so unapproachable, that we have ventured to quote it here. It was even thus with Janet,—

Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery
Swift to be hurled,
Anywhere, anywhere,
Out of the world !

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE first suspicion entertained of the fate of poor Janet, the isolated, the desolate, and the friendless, was awakened in Lady Fathom's mind by the receipt of a letter, wild in parts, incoherent in others, and blotted with tears, but which yet had sufficient method in its madness, to give some account of the death of the little Gaspar, and the dreadful promptings of despair at work in the young mother's breaking heart. The letter ran thus :—

DEAR AND HONOURED LADY,—Woe, woe, woe! Woe for ever and ever, without one gleam of comfort, one ray of hope! Past, present, and future are now one dark abyss. I came, so nigh

in hope and joy, to press my darling to my heart, and carry him away with me,—I, I, the lost one,—I, whose frailty cost a mother her life and a father his reason,—I, a foul blot on a spotless name,—I, a wretch, the victim of a villain,—I, to dream of hope and joy,—I, to feel that tsweet and hopeful bliss the Innocent and Virtuous enjoy. Not long, not long, dear lady ! At the very Station I met my sister and her husband, and she, the sister who had shared my every joy, my every sorrow, in careless childhood and in happy youth,—she, to whom I had been a mother in tenderness and love, though only two years older than herself,—she treated me with a coldness and a scorn which taught me how low I had fallen, and though come to seek me, and to offer me a home with them, she dared to outrage my heart with the cold and cruel stipulation, that I should part for ever from the “evidence,” as she called him, “of my shame !” Ah, lady ! at that very moment, while indignation lent me spirit to leave her in disdain,

he lay in his little coffin, dead ! dead ! dead ! lost to me for ever.—And, oh, maddening, heart-rending thought, he died a victim to my desertion, and these wretches' carelessness,—burnt, burnt to death !..... Lady, you are a mother ! and you will weep for me. They say I have been mad,—perhaps it is true,—perhaps I am so now, though now the storm within has subsided, and a calm, the calm of despair is in my soul ! .. But I cannot live on thus,—oh no, no, no ! every moment, fancy shews me my child, surrounded by the cruel flames ; I see his anguish, I hear his shrieks,—I watch his dying tortures,—and then I see him as I saw him last. The flames had spared his lovely, his angelic face, his neck, his hair ! and a placid smile was on his cherub lip. One day earlier, (and but for that heartless villain I had been with him in time,) he would have been saved ! This thought distracts me, and tempts me to curse the cold and cruel one,—but no, no, mine be the curse, mine the anguish,—the mother forsook, who then was

likely to cherish or to tend?.....They have laid him in the grave!—and I stood by the while,—and, oh, miracle of heartless apathy! my heart did not break.

And I am young and strong, and have many, many years to live this hopeless life, for

Death is slow in answering to the call of youth and sorrow!

But no, no, no! I will not live! it is too much; the torture is too keen, the trial too severe!—My brain is on fire, while my heart is ice. This night I steal away to watch alone beside his little grave, and there, alone with him, I can ponder on the future and the past. If the suggestions of my frenzied anguish, (resisted more than once) tempt me there, *I feel that I shall yield!* and that no morrow's sun will rise to mock my woe.

Should it be thus, oh lady, you are great and rich and powerful, blest with a kind husband, and, oh God! a child! then pity the

bereaved, the desolate, the frantic, and if, maddened by remorse and misery, I do that deed, which, done in cold blood, “damns eternally,” do you raise your voice, when the truth is known, for the wretched Janet,—say, that till reason left her, she believed in a Saviour, and would not have defied him ; and then, oh, have her laid beside her darling, the only favour she craves, the only wish she knows ;—and so, if you do this, may God protect you from every peril and every snare, shield you from the cold, the calculating, the heartless villain who has wrought my ruin, and bless you in your dear, dear child ! Amen.

JANET.

CHAPTER XIX.

LADY FATHOM was deeply and inexpressibly affected by this touching, this heart-rending letter. She took it to Sir Noah,—for the most perfect confidence was now established between them. This change was fraught for Sir Noah with a joy, a rapture, and a sweet contentment, which atoned to him amply for all the sacrifices he insisted on making, of his time, his old cronies, his favourite pursuits; and even Ada was astonished at the additional comfort she derived from the intimate footing she was now on, with one, who, though certainly not very well suited to herself, in age, tastes, or habits, was still the

husband it had pleased heaven to allot to her, and the father of her child, besides being (what perhaps a younger and a handsomer man might not have been) fervently grateful for every token of affection and love she gave him, passionately, and yet not teasingly devoted to her, proud beyond measure of her youth and beauty, and lavish in her cause, of all that affection could prompt or wealth purchase.

To a woman of the grateful, sensitive, and generous temper of Ada, these qualities (now fully revealed in the sweet intimacy of an unrestrained intercourse) endeared even the age and ugliness, which Sir Noah often deplored with affecting *naïveté*; and when she contrasted, what her shrewd mind now suggested, was the double-dealing, the treachery, and the selfish sensuality of him, whom, had she been free to choose, she would have selected as her partner for life, she grew hourly more reconciled to her fate, and more and more resolved to draw her happiness henceforth, only from the fountains of virtue and

truth ; and since heaven had decreed that the rare and intoxicating cup of rapture should never approach her lips, to be content with the perennial source of peace and comfort granted to her instead.

Of Major Smiley, after the perusal of Janet's letter, and the recollection of the active part he had taken in the late mysterious and mortifying affair, Ada, all unsuspecting as she was, began to think with distrust, doubt, and even a vague dread.

He must have known Janet's former history, since he introduced her to Lady Fathom, and recommended her as a young and bereaved widow. Ada recalled Janet's unwillingness to be questioned on the subject, and the restraint she had always evinced in the presence of Major Smiley, or when his name was mentioned. Ada knew, too, that Janet's child was called Gaspar, a circumstance she had attributed to his having perhaps acted as sponsor for the child, but which now seemed more naturally explained in a way

which would account for poor Janet's allusion to snares into which she had fallen, and from which she trusted Lady Fathom would escape, and identified the Major as the cold and calculating villain, the poor girl was so tempted to curse.

The more Lady Fathom pondered on this *dénouement* of a deep domestic tragedy, (alas ! of every-day occurrence,) the more probable did it appear to her. She had nothing to oppose to it but her own unwillingness to think harshly of any one, (a friend particularly,) and the habit of gratitude she had formed for Major Smiley ever since he was instrumental in saving her boy's life.

However, all this was so completely surmise, and might be so unjust, that Ada resolved not to mention her suspicions to Sir Noah till they were either confirmed or refuted. He, in the simplicity of his nature, saw only in Janet's allusions, the ravings of insanity, and was not at all convinced that the frailty of which she accused herself, its results, and the seducer sue

glanced at, were not chimeras of an excited and disordered brain. Sir Noah readily agreed to Ada's wish, that they should set out for London immediately,—if possible, to save Janet's life; and if the horrible catastrophe she hinted at had occurred, to do their utmost to ascertain her fate, and secure what they believed would be a righteous verdict—Temporary insanity,—and to use their influence to carry out her last and only wish, that of being buried by the side of her child.

Sir Noah and Lady Fathom, then, with their own darling and his nurses, set out for London an hour after the receipt of Janet's letter, and to lose no time on an affair of life and death, they drove at once to Mrs. Koddle's.

CHAPTER XX.

Mrs. KODDLE and her household were as usual regaling themselves with tea and toast, when they were startled by the arrival of "genuine quality;" or in their own more familiar language, "carriage people;" and Mrs. Koddle hoped the object of the visit might be to place some little unfortunate under her "more than maternal care," (to use the words of her own advertisement,) and thus supply the "vacancy" caused by the death of little Gaspar. In high glee at such a prospect, Mrs. Koddle just slipped on her best cap, and in a black silk gown, large white muslin apron, and white cape, also hurried on for the

occasion, she looked a most comfortable, respectable, and motherly person indeed !

Her large pliant features assumed a coaxing, toadying expression, her twinkling eyes were ready with tears of plausibility, and her mouth with an agreeing smile ; great then was her dismay, when hastening to receive her grand guests in the room where so lately the little victim of her criminal inattention had been laid out, Mrs. Koddle found that this important visit had reference solely to the unfortunate event she so wished hushed up, and the poor young mother, whose box she already looked upon as not likely ever to be claimed, and therefore the contents to be sold or used, "to defray its expenses !"

However, Mrs. Koddle, deeply as she was disappointed, was much too wise not to answer Lady Fathom's queries with the deepest deference and readiest civility. She took care of course to eulogise and extol her own care, in spite of the horrible evidence of her late neg-

lect ; but Lady Fathom was too kind-hearted to add to the remorse which she felt sure the woman must feel, and having at length ascertained all Mrs. Koddle could tell her of Janet's demeanour while there, and found out too that she knew in reality nothing of the poor girl's real feelings, past history, or intentions when she left her, she took her leave, much alarmed and perplexed about the isolated and desolate wanderer, and with a sad presentiment, that, as far as this world was concerned, Janet Macauley was at rest.

Sir Noah and herself, having decided on inserting advertisements in the papers, proclaiming Janet as missing, and apprising the police of their loss, repaired, sad at heart, to their home in Belgrave-square ; and as the gambols of little Noah delighted their eyes and beguiled them of their sorrow, Ada pictured to herself what she would feel in Janet's place ; and at the thought, her tears flowed fast, and she be-

came far more disposed to pity than condemn, even the rash rebellion against her Heavenly Father's will, with which a something seemed to tell her, Janet had wound up her hapless and most faulty life.

CHAPTER XXI.

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care,
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young and so fair !
While the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing,
Take her up instantly,
Loving not loathing !

Still for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family !
Wipe those pale lips of hers,
Oozing so clammyly.

* * * * *

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Smoother them compose them,
And her eyes close them,
Staring so blindly.

Horribly staring,
Thro' muddy impurity,
As when with a daring
Last look of despairing,
Fix'd on Futurity.

Loop up her tresses,
Escaped from the comb,
The fair auburn tresses,
While wonderment guesses
Where was her home.

Make no harsh scrutiny,
Into her mutiny ;
Rash and undutiful,
Past all dishonour,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful !

And beautiful indeed she was, even in death,
—poor, frail, guilty Janet ! And awfully touching was the picture of that young and fair creature, in the rough but kind arms of the Humane Society's man, who, on the morning after her desperate act, found the body, which had floated some miles from the bridge where she had thrown herself ; and at length drew it to the

shore, near Putney. Her beautiful features, her long, fair hair, her delicate form, and her deep mourning garb, elicited expressions of pity and emotion, even from those to whom death in this shape was so familiar.

They did take her up tenderly, though experience taught them there was not a shadow of hope. Yet with kind, though rough hands, they wrung the wet from her garments, and her hair,—

Wiped her pale lips,
Oozing so clammy,—

composed her beautiful limbs, and washed away the mud and the weeds from her sweet young face, and from her large black eyes, ‘horribly staring;’ gently did they close those eyes that had shed so many tears !

Having carefully removed the body to the nearest public house, they proceeded to give information of the accident ; and the result was, that on the subsequent morning, appeared in all the papers, the following notice :—“ Found drowned, by Jones and Smith, servants of the

Humane Society.—Yesterday morning, the body of a very beautiful young woman, apparently about eighteen, dressed in deep and very handsome mourning, was discovered by two servants of the Humane Society, a little below Putney Bridge. The men succeeded in recovering the body, and bringing it to shore, but it had evidently been many hours in the water, and therefore no attempts at resuscitation were made. Nothing was found in the young girl's pockets, but round her neck was a locket, containing a curl of infant's hair of very light gold, with the initials of G. M., aged two years; the young woman's clothes (all of a superior description,) were marked J. M., and a pocket handkerchief had in the corner, the name, 'Janet.' We mention these circumstances, in the hope that the body of this female, evidently belonging to a respectable class, and possibly something more, may be claimed by her friends. The deceased has very long fair hair, large black eyes with long black lashes, delicate Grecian

features, and a very slight figure, rather below the middle-size ; a wedding-ring would seem to indicate, that, in spite of the extreme youth of the deceased, she is a married woman. There is nothing to throw any light on the manner in which she got into the river, whether by accident, by her own deed, or that of any other person. There are some severe contusions on the head, and a cut on the temple ; but such as most probably occurred, either in throwing herself from a bridge, or by the water beating the body against some hard substance. The coroner's inquest will sit on the body at the Ship public house, Putney, at twelve o'clock on Friday, when it is hoped the body will be claimed, and some light thrown on this tragical occurrence." This announcement, published in all the morning papers, met the eyes of Sir Noah and Lady Fathom, Alice (Janet's sister) and her husband, the Rev. Peter McHowler, and the cold-blooded author of all this

evil, Gaspar Smiley ! Lady Fathom, and even poor Sir Noah, received this confirmation of their worst fears with tears of sorrow and of sympathy. Alice, with a cry of horror and a sharp pang of remorse, sunk lifeless into her husband's arms, and even the Calculator put down the cup of chocolate he was raising to his lips, pushed away his hot roll and his devilled kidney, walked to the window and threw it up, gasping for the fresh air, though a cold chill ran through his frame, and though his lips grew blue and his knees shook.

A few moments, however, convinced him that no exposure or annoyance to himself was included in this public announcement of his victim's death ! "I must get the child into some asylum, I suppose," he inwardly exclaimed, "for the little Trojan is so confoundedly strong and healthy, there seems little hope of his 'hopping the twig;' and that once done, it's all for the best, I doubt not. She was a confounded bore, with her sad face and her reproachful eyes ; besides that I

never felt quite sure of her, and a word to Lady Fathom of her former connexion with me, would have done for me in that quarter ! No, on the whole, though it was a shock at first, it's a great relief. I've enough bother just now with Anthony, and his approaching trial. He will certainly be found guilty, and be hanged, I believe ; but I've great hopes that pride will make him preserve his incognito, and his kindness of heart, or rather weakness, for it t's nothing else, preven his carrying out his threat of exposing me. Still I wish it were all over quietly,—it would be better for both of us. With his feelings, it will be a mercy to put him out of his misery, and I shall not breathe freely till it is all over. It's an awkward thing, having a mistress drowned and a brother hanged ; but if these things are to be, the sooner, and the less row about it, the better. As long as neither peach before death I'm safe enough after." So saying, and having looked in the glass, drawn up his collar, played with his whiskers, arranged his hair, and smiled

so that he could examine his fine teeth, the Calculator returned to his breakfast and his paper, and quietly completed both in his usual manner.

CHAPTER XXII.

AND the sisters met again ! Janet and Alice ! the fallen and the proud one ! but they seem to have changed places now. There is so sacred a dignity on the face of the Dead, so humble an anguish in the bending and self-upbraiding sister. How, as she gazed on Janet, whose corpse was stretched on a table in a little public-house, the Past came back upon her heart ! Janet had so loved her little sister, so cherished, so defended, so watched over, so toiled for her ! Two years her senior in reality, (and much more precocious in proportion,) in character, intelligence, and acquirements, with a timid and invalid mother,

(often quite incapable of a mother's duties,) it was Janet who had acted a mother's part,—Janet whose needle had kept Alice in neatness and comfort,—Janet whose patience had conquered Alice's natural inaptitude and inattention, and put her at least on an average with other girls of her age,—Janet who had even braved their terrible father himself, to shelter the timid, shrinking Alice,—Janet to whom she had owed every comfort, every good, every blessing of joyous childhood and sunny youth, until the fatal time when Janet fell a victim to her own romantic and credulous heart—and to the Calculator !

And how had Alice requited all these years of love, devotion, tenderness ? How had she comforted Janet in sorrow ? How had she upheld Janet in shame ? How haughtily, how coldly ! how haughtily had she, in the arrogance of an untried virtue, insulted her sister's misery ! How every cold and cruel word recoils now upon her own heart ! How fruitlessly she bends and weeps beside the unconscious Janet ! Janet's

words of indignant scorn and wounded tenderness had stung Alice, it is true, but oh what words could ever reproach her like those cold, cold lips, which shall never part or smile or move again,—never answer, as they always did in years gone by, with words of tenderness and kisses of love! Weep on, weep on, ungrateful Alice! Janet is indeed avenged. Never from Alice's memory, while memory lasts, can the "long ago" be effaced, or those two last and bitterly contrasted meetings be washed away by tears. Far, far away, in her highland home, years hence, when herself a mother, Alice shall watch her little maidens,

Paddle in the burn,
And pu' the gowans fine,

and then, when they recall her own happy childhood, shared, guarded by poor Janet, and tears of soft regret begin to rise, memory, the uncompromising, the all-recording, shall bring back the bitter taunts to Janet the afflicted!—the bitter watch by Janet the avenged!

Sir Noah and Lady Fathom arrived in time to give their evidence, and secure the verdict they desired, and which, all things considered, was perhaps the just one,—namely, that “the deceased, recently recovered from a fit of delirium, caused by the awful and accidental death of her child, wandered about, friendless and forlorn, until straying at night on to Westminster Bridge, she drowned herself, in a state of temporary insanity.”

Sir Noah and Lady Fathom undertook the management and expense of Janet’s burial, and by them she was interred close to her child; and a plain marble tombstone, with the ages and names of both, alone recorded this simple tragedy of every-day life.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MAJOR SMILEY having ascertained that Adolphus Fitzopal was actually gone to Gretna with (as both believed) the heiress, hastened to Brighton, to make out as plausible a story as he could, including at once his friend's recovery and his elopement. He had good hopes that the pique which he anticipated Ada would feel against Fitzopal, would stand him in good stead, and that not to appear to wear the willow, and act the dismal part of *La Berjère délaissée*, she would gladly adopt him as her cavalier, and transfer to him at least all the privileges she had granted to her cousin. Major Smiley, then, was not a little disappointed and enraged to find the Fathoms had left Brighton, nor was he at all

comforted by hearing, from a pretty and talkative young housemaid, whom he occasionally honoured with a smile and a stare, that her master and mistress had set off solely to see what had become of poor Mrs. Janet Macauley, who left in high spirits on Friday, to fetch her boy on a visit, and she had, as the girl said, "not been heard of no more, till a letter comed, sealed with black, writ like one mazed, telling as how her child was burnt to death, and she gone clear crazed, and ready to make away with herself, and begging Sir Noah and Lady Fathom to claim her dead corpse, and have her buried by her child in Turnham Green churchyard ; and," added the girl, crying, "poor crittur, it's all come to pass, for I've read it myself, writ on the papers."

"And how," asked Major Smiley, "my pretty Nancy, did you happen to know what was in the letter to your mistress?"

Nancy coloured, for she had learned it from the lady's-maid, who, while brushing her lady-

ship's hair, generally took the opportunity of reading over her shoulder, any note or letter she was attentively perusing at the time ; a bad habit, but one many ladies indulge in, and which it may be useful to remind them, puts their most important secrets, and those of their families and friends, in the power of the most prying, impertinent, low-minded, and treacherous, of that ill-educated, and therefore degraded race, the race of servants.

" I don't want to put you to the blush, my pretty Nancy," said the Major, tapping her blushing cheek,—“ I only wanted, as I too feel an interest in poor Mrs. Janet, (whom, you know, I recommended to your lady,) to know whether she said anything more in her letter, or mentioned any other person by name, friend or foe.”

" I haven't no cause to blush about the matter, sir," said Nancy, " though one natural flushes up a bit when one's took by surprise ; but I only tells you what I was telled.”

“ And was that all, my dear ? ”

“ Oh goodness gracious no ! there was a deal more, and all about snares, and sin, and a cold-blooded villain as had undone her, and about her being the cause of her father’s going mad, and her mother’s dying broken-hearted, and all that ; and us servants, we warn’t at all surprised, for somehow we never thought as how Mrs. Janet wor a married woman, because she always fit so shy of any questions about former days and married life, and though for certain she wore a wedding-ring, she warn’t proud of shewing it, as is natural, but seemed all for hiding it up ; and now it’s all comed out, and all her moping ways, and her shyness to men-folks, and sich like, is all accounted for, and it turns out some feller or other is at the bottom of it all. They always is, nasty, mean, coaxing bits of things ; they gets a poor gal into trouble, to please theirselves, and then leaves her to all the sorrow and all the shame.

Poor Mistress Janet, she was a pretty, civil young crittur, and all I wishes is, that she were alive and well now, and that that ere vile feller as ruined her were hanged fust and then gibbeted limb from limb."

As Major Smiley could not say Amen to this wish, and did not at all relish the picture it presented to his mind, he asked Nancy to allow him to write a note, in which he informed Lady Fathom of the rapid recovery, both mental and bodily, of her cousin Adolphus, and of his marriage with the Indian heiress, Miss Castleton. Trusting to woman's natural curiosity, at least about such matters, he, to secure either a letter or an interview, hinted that there were some very strange, ludicrous, and romantic circumstances connected with this elopement, which he should be delighted to reveal when he had an opportunity; and having desired Nancy to forward this letter by the post, if her lady did not return in the course of the day, he proceeded to Cliff-house, to make some arrangements there,

in case the return of the Fathoms to Brighton should induce him to prolong his residence there, but fully determined to join them in London if he found they were likely to remain there any length of time.

At Cliff-house the Major found a letter from Fitzopal, announcing that he was lying *perdu* in London, preparatory to carrying off, his, to him, detestable prize, but that he had quite made up his mind to the appalling sacrifice, and meant, by the glorious life he would lead as the heiress's husband, to repay himself for all the disgust and reluctance he felt to her person and the whole affair.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AFTER Sir Noah and Lady Fathom had paid the last sad tributes to the unfortunate creature, who, however guilty, had been even more sinned against than sinning, and who was interesting to them from her many gentle and endearing qualities, and the service she had rendered them in the case of their child, they felt little disposed to return immediately to Brighton, where little Noah would so miss his kind and constant playfellow and friend. Still less were they disposed to prolong their stay in hot and deserted London; but as they had received a most pressing invitation from the young bride and bridegroom, the Count and Countess Von Flitter, to spend a few weeks

with them at a chateau they were inhabiting in the environs of Munich, they resolved to make a little excursion for that purpose, and on their return, to spend the autumn and winter at Strata Hall, Sir Noah's old ancestral seat, where they had never yet been since their marriage; and their dependants were all impatient to welcome their master and mistress, and do honour to the young heir.

A trip even into the heart of the continent is a trifling undertaking now; though a few years ago, weeks of preparation were necessary, even for a jaunt to Paris. In the wealthy and well-appointed establishment of the Fathoms, where every servant knew his place, and every place had its appropriate servant, the master and mistress had but to will, and their will was done.

At dinner, on the day when they had attended in person poor Janet's funeral, and wept to see her sister, Alice, come fainting from the grave, they decided on this excursion, and the next day found them at Dover, with little Noah,

his nurse, (who could also act as lady's-maid,) and Stubbs, Sir Noah's valet.

They had travelled, as all sensible people do now, by railway; bringing their travelling carriage with them, for such parts of the continent as should yet be unprovided with those wondrous triumphs of human ingenuity—triumphs over Time and Space, (the once unconquered and unconquerable)—railways!

Few adventures occur now to travellers of any kind, (the higher orders, particularly,) barring of course accidents, daily more rare; and therefore, almost as soon as the letter which announced their approach, our party found themselves sweeping along an avenue of pine-trees, at the end of which stood a large, old, irregular building, belonging to the mother of the young Count, and called the Chateau (or rather the Schloss) Flitterburg. The situation of the Schloss was romantic, and the scenery wild and beautiful; but to eyes accustomed to the exquisite order and keeping of an English country

seat, in its noble park, with the velvet sod and the superb trees, it looked the wild abode of desolation and disorder. No fences, no trim hedges, no palace-like stables, kennels, and out-buildings,—all was open, wild, untidy.

The old Countess Von Flitter, warmly attached to the life of Munich, her weekly reunions, her knitting, her tea and card parties, and her gossips, who had been young in her youth, and had grown old with her, only inhabited this Schloss for a month or two in fine weather, and was there now much against her will, because the young Count thought his pretty bride would be more impressed with a Schloss or castle, however wild and desolate, than with the most comfortable and richly furnished floor or flat, in one of the best houses in Munich; and here he was right. The English are romantic, particularly in early youth, and the old Castle Flitterburg, which had stood many sieges, and was mixed up with the history of Bavaria, particularly when seen by the light of the

honeymoon, by whose delicious and enchanting radiance Fanny first beheld it, had a charm for her, now the loving bride of the last of its Lords, which no spruce modern mansion could have boasted. The large rooms were damp, it is true, but Fanny's heart was warm with love and youth; she found no modern comforts in the numerous and spacious rooms, but every room was furnished—with a legend, and if no guests awaited the young bride, at least every apartment was inhabited by a ghost.

The old Countess Von Flitter was a plain, kind, amiable, very odd-looking person, with a good deal of dignity of feeling, and some refinement of mind; but with an exterior which in England would have caused her to be taken for an old washerwoman. She dressed very plainly, wore no hair, had no front teeth, generally was wrapped up in a large woollen shawl, took quantities of snuff, a great deal of coffee, was always either knitting or spinning, rose at six, and dined at twelve. When at the Schloss, she always sat

either by the chimney, where huge logs burnt, if it were not very hot weather ; or, in the intense heat of the German summers she might always be found in a little arbour, on which the morning sun came in all its radiance, or a summer-house, where, in the afternoon, she enjoyed the declining rays of the God of day.

She was a very good, kind-hearted, pious old lady, was the Dowager Countess Von Flitter. She did not attempt to keep pace with the times, and the changes and innovations, which it required, in her opinion, all the energies of youth and health to follow. But of a very small income, she allowed her son the uttermost farthing she could afford, consistently with keeping up her own dignity as his father's widow, and his own mother, when she heard that he had fallen in love, and was going to be married,—that is, if she gave her sanction and her blessing to the match. This she never for one moment dreamt of withholding, for there were funds of German sentiment in her old heart ; and while her eye-

sight lasted, she had been a great novel-reader. She wrote the first letter she had written, except to her son, for many years, to Miss Fanny Revel; and the elegance of its language, the warmth and nobility of its sentiments, and the dignified tenderness of its tone, even through the medium of a translation, (for except a very little French, the old Countess knew no language but her own,) impressed Fanny with a tender respect for her future mother-in-law, which was a little tried when first that very homely looking old woman held out her arms to welcome her son's bride.

A few days, however, wore away the unfavourable impression produced solely by externals, and Fanny soon found more elegance of thought and mind, and more delicate attention to, and consideration for, her, in the dowdy old Countess, than she would have met with among nine-tenths of the well-preserved, stately, and richly drest mothers-in-law of the English aristocracy, most of whom look upon a daughter-in-law as a sort

of natural foe, always to be treated as such ; while in Germany, and indeed all over the continent, the chosen of the son generally takes her place at once in the mother's heart as a daughter ; to be cherished, encouraged, honoured, and trusted ; not to be the object of carping disparagement, wounding neglect, and unavailing jealousy. The old Countess, who, plain and even ugly as she was then, had been a beauty, and a gay dresser in her youth, took a good deal of pride in Fanny's English elegance and youthful bloom. In England, where beauty and elegance are so rife, and accomplishments so universal, Fanny merely ranked as a pretty girl, tolerably educated ; but in Germany, where beauty is more rare, grace and style still rarer, and the solid much more cultivated than the showy, Fanny took rank at once as a first-rate belle and a highly accomplished person.

Fanny had not the scientific knowledge of music, which she met with in some of the young German ladies ; but she had a brilliant execu-

tion, a natural taste, and a musical memory, which enabled her to play or sing without notes. anything which she had heard once or twice; and this, on either piano, harp, or guitar. Then, under Miss Golightly's zealous care, and with a good deal of her clever aid, Fanny had filled a portfolio with large, terrific heads, and naked gladiators, in black and red chalks; and had finished a very pretty collection of miniatures on ivory, added to which, she had stores of fancy-work to show, most of which require, it is true, little but knack and neatness, but make a wonderful impression on the uninitiated, who consider them evidences of great genius.

Of this kind were the wax fruit and flowers Fanny modelled, with great taste and skill; oriental tinting, so unequalled for butterflies, fruit, and flowers, but as an art, so merely mechanical as to inspire something of contempt, when understood. Fancy-basket-making in shells, rice-paper, cloves, beads, coloured alum, and a hundred other ingredients; Coburg aprons,

mulating lace,—japanning, bead-work, and finally, crochet and worsted-work, the most fashionable of all.

In all these, Fanny excelled, and had specimens of her excellence with her, to delight and amaze. Fanny then soon became very popular among a people naturally hospitable, and fond of the English. Her national ballads were listened to with rapture, her fancy-work gazed at with admiration and wonder, her drawings extolled as masterpieces, and her light, graceful, modest style of dancing, the theme of universal praise; all the young Count's friends congratulated him on his great success in having secured such a wife, with a thousand pounds! so much amiability, grace, talent, and beauty, evidently so fond of him, and so happy, and whose influential connexions had obtained for him the valuable appointment, on the duties of which he was to commence in the course of a month or two; but some of whose emoluments had already found their way into his attenuated purse.

Count Von Flitter's success induced a great many to plan, and some few to effect, visits to the great marriage mart of the world, London !

And if Von Flitter's friends, and his own heart, congratulated him, the young bride was not less satisfied, or less happy in the result of this love match. From a neglected poverty at home, the scorn of an ambitious mother, the butt of a ruined father, and the over-worked slave of a despotic governess, she had become the idolized wife of her first love and first lover, the darling daughter of his kind old mother, the idol and the belle of Munich and its neighbourhood ; and now, to fill her cup of bliss, her beloved sister was coming to share in, and witness all this happiness, just as she had to whisper in her ear, a secret which Fanny had not yet found courage to reveal, (welcome as she knew it would be,) either to the lover-husband, or his kind old mother ; but upon which she pondered in secret, with the rapture of a miser bending over some hidden treasure.

The young Count and his bride were amusing themselves in a forest, which formed part of the Von Flitter estate, after their *mittag*, (or dinner,) at the antique hour of twelve, but which, universal in Germany, and quite necessary to the comfort and health of the old Countess, Fanny tried to accustom herself to, and ended by liking.

It was a lovely afternoon in early autumn, (the richest and most exquisite season of the year,) when, taking with him his guitar, his sketch-book, a volume of Schiller, and a basket of fruit, the young Count led his fair bride across the flower and moss-enamelled sod, and through the green vistas of a dark pine-wood. Fanny had with her, her work-basket, and was furtively engaged on an article of apparel, so minute and fairy-like, that it would have excited the suspicions of any one but the young Count, who was so entirely engrossed by Fanny's present claims on his love, that he never thought of the deeper and even dearer ties which might unite them.

Fanny, like the renowned Welch parson, could do many things at once. She sat at her husband's feet, leaning her head on his knee, her fingers employed with her tiny work, learning at once the air and the words of a sweet German ballad he was singing to her. It was his way of teaching her his own rich language, and she certainly made great progress under his system; but she could pronounce prettily and very sweetly in German, without having mastered any of the real difficulties of that rich and most tormenting language; for the young Count feared to alarm and disenchant her with grammars and lexicons; dreading, that, like Napoleon and Scrope Davies, she should be stopped by the *elements*.

They were then thus delightfully engaged—(a lovely addition to a lovely sylvan scene!) Fanny, simply elegant in her white muslin dress and black silk apron, her auburn hair braided *à la grecque*, and her round Swiss hat, with wild flowers twined in it; and he, dressed in a light summer

blouse, with a straw hat too, decorated by Fanny ; very handsome always, but something more now, with eyes lighted and softened by happy love—when the unwonted sound of wheels, rapidly traversing a road at a little distance, caught their ears. The Count, at Fanny's desire, ran to see who was approaching, and returned to tell his bride, that it was an English travelling carriage, and, if he mistook not, contained Sir Noah and Lady Fathom. They then hastened by a short cut, hand-in-hand, to the castle, to be ready to receive such welcome guests, and to prepare the old Countess, (who was sitting knitting in the sun,) in her little summer-house, for this important addition to the family circle.

CHAPTER XXV.

ONE short, delightful month, (all the time Sir Noah Fathom could spare from important business in England,) passed delightfully away at the Schloss Flitterburg. Ada had been introduced to all the lions of Munich, its amiable and hospitable aristocracy, its noble institutions, and various objects of interest. Sir Noah had found many kindred spirits among its antiquarians, and much to interest him in its museums, libraries, and choice collections; but he had never forgotten the penalty allotted, even to a merely mental bigamy, and when most disposed to wed himself to Science, remembered he had a young

wife, and was wise betimes. Ada, always the same, graceful, lively, simple, and endearing, was warmly appreciated at Munich, and little Noah already began to lisp a few German words. But the unwelcome time came for breaking up this happy coterie; the Count had received an order to commence, in a week or two, his official duties at Stuttgard, whither of course his wife was to accompany him. The old Countess was to return to her gossips, her tea-parties, her knitting, and weekly meetings in Munich, and Sir Noah's man of business in London was impatient for his return.

It was the day before the Fathoms were to depart, that an excursion was planned to a very pretty and romantic village, through the forest, some ten miles from Munich. There were some antiquities to delight Sir Noah, and lovely scenery, choice fruit, and a celebrated *laitage* to entice the younger people. Here they were to enjoy a German tea-drinking. The old Countess and Sir Noah went with the nurse and little

Noah, in the rumbling, heavy old berlin of the Von Flitters, and Ada, Fanny, and the Count rode on horseback through the delightfully shaded glades of the pine-forest. Between Sir Noah and the old Countess conversation was impossible, as she spoke no English, and he no German ; and though she could converse a little in French, yet as Sir Noah's, like Chaucer's abbess's, was " the French of Bow," it was quite unintelligible to her ; she therefore amused herself with her knitting and he with his meditations, in which indeed he became so entirely wrapped, that he was amazed when he found they were arrived at Blumenburg, and for some time he could not recall, in the least, where they were, how they got there, or the object of their visit.

They found Blumenburg all alive, the Gasthaus, or rural inn, to which they repaired, full of company, musicians, and merry-making ; in the gardens, tables were spread for a banquet, flags were floating, festoons of flowers were hung, a band was playing, dancing was going on with

spirit; and on enquiry, they found that all these festivities announced a double wedding. A father and a daughter had both been united that very day, to the objects of their choice; the father, who had been only three months a widower, and who was described as a hideous old fellow, but very well off, was married to a very pretty young girl, who unwillingly accepted him at her father's hands; and the daughter, about two-and-twenty, but also with some fortune, had given her hand, (prompted by ambition,) to an old, decrepid, ruined nobleman.

This account excited the curiosity of our party, and they resolved, after their own repast, if possible, to get a view of the two new-married couples. At present the brides and bridegrooms were in the house, and it was the younger members of the wedding party, who, to wile away the time before the banquet, had struck up a gay waltz in the garden.

After Sir Noah had delighted his eyes with the antiquities of the place, and the young

people had sufficiently enjoyed the exquisite scenery, and the old Countess had finished the stocking she was knitting, they sat down to a repast called a *thé*, though tea had very little to do with it, being, as that beverage generally is on the continent, quite unpalatable to the English taste, a lukewarm, colourless, and very weak infusion of bohea-dust, more than half milk, and mawkishly sweet. But, *en revanche*, the coffee was excellent, as were the bowls of cream, the piles of fruit and of German cakes, rolls, *gipfels*, and pastry, and the variety of confectionery and preserves most tempting and delicious. After this *thé*, hearing that the brides and bridegrooms were about to open the rural ball, our party hurried into the garden, when, oh shame! shame! oh treachery unspeakable, and hoax bold and vile! in the elderly bridegroom, gaily dressed, with a youthful wig, white kid gloves, a light blue coat with silver buttons, a white satin waistcoat, pumps, silk stockings, and tights, scented with musk and

adorned with chains and rings, a gay bouquet of orange-blossoms, and a white favour in his button-hole, his eyes bright with love and triumph, and his face flushed with wine and conquest, whirling his young bride through the sauteuse waltz, was Professor Vanderhumbegger! and of course the sly-looking, demure, white-faced partner of the other bridegroom, the newly made Baroness, (the bride of a spare, sly, selfish-looking old fellow, with blue eyes, shaking hands, and toothless gums, but still the bride of a Baron,) was the Professor's cunning daughter, Louiselie. On, on they danced for some time, the old bridegroom, Vanderhumbegger, and his sad, sulky-looking, but pretty young bride; and the sly, ambitious Louiselie, with her tottering old Baron; and there, scarcely believing his own eyes, stood, looking on, him, to whose credulity they owed all they possessed, (bride and baron included,)—yes, gazing at the daring malingerer, whose sham blindness had drawn from him so ample a provision, the kind old Sir Noah! Lady

Fathom, too, recognised the old wretch, over whose sham blindness they had so often lamented, and the cunning miss, who had so well forwarded her father's base imposition. Sir Noah and Lady Fathom looked at each other, irresolute how to act; just at this moment, the dance brought the old Professor close to his dupe. Sir Noah said, in a loud whisper in his ear, —“Professor Vanderhumbucker, allow me to congratulate you on your recovery from blindness, and myself on mine!”

Ghastly pale grew the cheek of the Professor, as, turning round, he recognised Sir Noah Fathom; he released his hold of his bride, and fell back in a fit, while his daughter, at the same moment discovering the same cause of terror, uttered a loud shriek, burst from her old, tottering Baron, with a jerk that upset him, and throwing herself on a seat, went off into strong hysterics.

On the recovery of the Professor, Sir Noah, whose kind heart prevented his exposing even

such an impostor, before his bride and his friends, summoned him to a private interview in a room of the inn; and when they were alone, as Sir Noah stood looking in dignified sorrow rather than anger, at the trembling, abject figure of the pallid, but bedizened old bridegroom, the latter fell on his knees, and burst into tears.

“Do not ruin—do not expose me! for the sake of the science we both love, and the hours we have spent together, have mercy! oh have mercy! I have not one word to say in my defence,—I have no hope but in you, and in the fact, that the deep in science and the gifted in mind are generally the merciful and the good!”

Poor Sir Noah saw the flattery, but yet it took effect; he said,—“Rise, Professor Vanderhumburger! rise! do not add to the meanness of your present degradation. Detection so complete, of a fraud so vile, must be almost sufficient punishment even for you.”

“And you will not withdraw the provision—oh angel of goodness and mercy!—the income

on the strength of which I have married myself, and given my daughter in marriage?"

"How impudent is meanness!" said Sir Noah, haughtily; "and how marvellous, that you should dare to hope anything from the charity of one you have so duped!"

"Then I must end my days in a workhouse, and my daughter, the Baroness Vonarmheit, must work in the fields! But we deserve it all,—we imposed on the kindest, noblest, and most gifted of men," he added, sobbing, and falling again on his knees, "and we deserve even more of punishment and disgrace than his kind, noble heart can bear to inflict!"

Sir Noah, a little touched, turned away; at this moment, the door opened, and Louiselie, in tears, knelt, in her bridal robe and veil, by her father's side. "My unhappy child, we are beggars!" said the Professor, (to give her her cue,) "but we deserve to be galley-slaves, for we have deceived the first of men and the greatest of geologists!"

Enough of this," said Sir Noah. "It is true, you both deserve exposure, disgrace, and ruin; had you, for one moment, tried to palliate or excuse your infamy, I would have denounced you as malingerers and impostors, and prosecuted you as such; but your humility disarms, your repentance softens me. Half the provision gladly allotted as an act of atoning friendship to a valued friend and a respected professor, shall be paid as a deed of charity to a detected impostor and a base malingerer. And now, go, old man, and tell the wretched girl you have deceived, —and you, you false woman, the old Baron you have purchased, that their cupidity is punished by the blow, which takes from you half the wages of sin."

The Professor and his daughter would fain have knelt, wept, and grovelled on, in the hope that by some adroit stroke of flattery or policy, they might yet recover the other half of their allowance; but Sir Noah resolutely and

haughtily withdrew, and left the Gasthaus shortly after with his party.

When the Fathoms were fairly gone, the old Professor and the new-made Baroness, having re-arranged their attire, washed away their tears, and recovered their composure, returned to their alarmed and wonder-stricken guests, with a plausible story, that the great English milor and miladi, who had just driven away with the Count and Countess Von Flitter, were distant relations, and very intimate friends, who had been much hurt and offended, to find that the Professor and his daughter had taken such important steps, as the selecting partners for life, without giving them (the Fathoms) any opportunity of offering an opinion on their choice, or of paying any of those little attentions, which they would have been so very proud to offer, on such a happy and promising occasion. This explanation restored the confidence of all parties, and the wedding-ball recommenced with renewed spirit. But,

Il faut des époux assortis,
Dans les liens du mariage
Jeune femme et vieux mari,
Feront toujours mauvais ménage.

Certainly, where there is not, as in the Fathoms' case, a fund of amiability, virtue, and truth, the young wife and the old husband make a ménage, which is in itself a perpetual punishment for all their sins; and the old Professor Vanderhumbegger found in his young *Frau*, docile and reserved as she seemed before marriage, a most determined coquette, spendthrift, and shrew after their union; while Louiselie Baroness Vonarmheit, did not, by her match, secure the *entrée* of the society she wished to move in; for her husband, a mean, sponging old gambler, had for certain suspected tricks at cards and dice, been kicked out of all good company himself. So Louiselie only secured a decrepid, haughty, exacting old pauper, whom she was compelled to maintain, or rather who by marriage had obtained possession of all she had,

and grudged her every *florin* she spent on herself.

And thus, in the very success of their own nefarious proceedings, father and daughter met with the retributive justice of a perpetual punishment. Even poetic justice must be satisfied by their fate—or would be, could we take a peep into their respective *ménages*.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE happy party assembled at the Schloss Flitterburg parted with lively and mutual regret; and the sisters and their husbands had afforded an ample proof, that either an imprudent love-match, or a *mariage de convenances* may be rendered happy by the amiability of the parties united. They proved indeed, did both Ada and Fanny, that “conduct is fate,”—that happiness depends far more on ourselves than on our circumstances,—that the heart makes its own climate,—and that, if, on the one hand, a timid girl is by harsh and worldly parents, given, without her own free will, to one she would not

have selected herself,—yet, if he is a kind, a loving, a generous, and an honourable man, devoted to her, and lavish of tenderness,—gratitude, duty, and affection, with entire confidence, and perfect esteem, will go very far towards supplying the place of that delightful, but often too evanescent feeling, first and passionate love ; while, on the other, if, under the influence of a romantic preference, which worldlings despise, and parents' too often scorn, a girl readily gives up all she has been accustomed to enjoy in her parents' house, and to covet in her husband's ; yet, if her love is of the right sort, tender, true, and constant, and reciprocated by a similar affection in her husband's heart, this first ambrosial and bewitching passion, is the arch-enchanter, conjuring up a fairy-land wherever he appears ; making poverty seem competence, and competence wealth ; atoning for every sacrifice, and gilding every joy ; and not, as the cold world imagines, twin-born with Novelty, and dying with Time ; but growing more tender as he becomes less ar-

dent, affection taking the place of passion, and a sweet and holy faith enduring to the last.

None then need despair; for all *can* be good, kind, and true. And all wedded pairs who are so, all who *never deceive, never neglect, never wound, and never grudge* each other anything of any kind which it is right to grant, who cultivate perfect truth, tenderness, politeness, thorough kindness and noble generosity, crowning all with sweet religion, (fair union of grace and faith,) all such wedded pairs, we aver, however brought together originally, will find comfort and support in their sacred partnership; and that it rests with the married, to make any match a happy match.

Sir Noah and Lady Fathom, on their return to Belgrave-square, found that Major Smiley had been repeatedly there, in the hopes of seeing them, and that he had been much surprised, puzzled, and disappointed by their sudden departure and protracted absence. They found, too, a formal invitation from Miss Castleton. (the

great Indian heiress,) to a grand soirée at her temporary home, Evergreen-house ; a card for Lady Fathom's brother, Wildair Revel, Esq., was enclosed, and ardently did Lady Fathom wish, (as she resolved to stay a few days in town to appear at this *soirée*,) that she could meet with poor Wildair, and take him with her. Although the invitation was nominally from Miss Castleton, Lady Fathom had no doubt that the party was given for the purpose of announcing her marriage with Captain Fitzopel, and Lady Fathom was sufficiently piqued, and, we must own it, mischievous, to anticipate no small enjoyment from the confusion of the bridegroom at a first meeting with herself, after the sly and double part he had been so long playing.

During the absence of the Fathoms, the trial of Anthony Smiley, known by the name of Anthony Develing, *alias* Green, *alias* Jones, *alias* Dubourg, had ended in his conviction of wilful murder of John Whitehead, policeman of the K division, a verdict according thereto, and sentence

of death. Even the cold-blooded Calculator could not read this without a shudder ; but as no cross-examination had been able to elicit from the prisoner his real name and history, Major Smiley consoled himself with the hope that it would never transpire ; and comforting himself with the reflection that dead men tell no tales, he wished the fatal day well over, and *en attendant*, amused himself as well as he could.

Marion Moore, the first love, and the once affianced bride of the wretched convict, was indefatigable in her attendance upon him in prison. Of course it is needless to say that it was through her that Anthony Smiley became aware of the abduction of the Fathoms' child, of his brother's whereabouts, and of all the secrets of his base and bad career. Through Marion, he had obtained the reward offered for the restoration of little Noah ; and though with the improvidence common to that class, they had squandered a great part of it, yet, with the rest, Anthony

had insisted on buying an annuity for Marion, and on settling a small provision on his little cripple.

Poor Marion's anguish knew no bounds, when she found the only man she had ever loved, condemned to death on the scaffold, and the hatred and vengeance she had long felt for the cruel Calculator became intense, when she found out the share he had had in his brother's apprehension, and the utter indifference he had manifested about his fate.

Marion made many efforts, both personally and by letter, to move Gaspar to exert his interest for his condemned brother ; but Gaspar was so afraid of being in the least mixed up in the affairs of the wretched convict, that he shunned Marion as his evil genius, refused to see her, or to notice her letters, and roused in her a resolution to punish the heartless brother, and the vile seducer, in that way which her knowledge of his feelings and position, would render most unbearable to him.

The night before Anthony's execution, was the very night of the return of the Fathoms to London ; and as they drove through the streets, the newsmen and hawkers were outvying each other in deafening details of the last dying speech and confession of Anthony Develing, *alias* Green, *alias* Jones, *alias* Dubourg.

Major Smiley, who felt very uncomfortable on the day before his brother's execution, frightened and unsettled, (much as he had sometimes done, when taking his seat in a dentist's arm-chair, preparatory to the forcible abstraction of a double tooth,) had determined to dine and spend the night at the West India Dock tavern, Blackwall, where experience told him, if a good dinner could quiet an evil conscience, his would certainly be lulled ; at one time he thought of inviting some friends to wile away the time, but he found himself so shaken in nerve, so restless, absent, and so very pale, that he judged it best to get over the time as well as he could alone. However, as he was proceeding towards

Blackwall, he met young Lord Harry Sportington, a wild fellow, and a cornet in his own regiment; knowing him to be an amusing, rattling, unobserving fellow, fond of a good dinner and his bottle, Major Smiley invited him to dine with him. He was gratified at the cordial manner, tinged with some respect, with which the young cornet, though a lord, met the advances of a major in his regiment, and one universally considered a most gentlemanly and pleasant fellow; but he was a little startled, when, after warmly thanking him, Lord Harry said,—“It’s a confounded bore that I can’t accept, Major, but the truth is, I’ve been engaged for the last week to go with six others of ‘ours,’ to see this fellow hanged to-morrow morning; we’ve ordered a regular hanging breakfast; paid a monstrous sum in advance for a room in some horrible inn, with a capital view of the scaffold, and as the bird’s to be strung up at eight, I couldn’t be in time if I slept at Blackwall; but I say, Major, why not breakfast with us,—it’ll be capital fun,

and the breakfast is to be supplied by Véry—so even you'll be able to put up with it, choice as you are ! Do come, Major, the party won't be complete without you, and so Devere and Wilson both said."

Major Smiley felt rather sick at this pressing invitation to a hanging breakfast, in honour of his own and only brother, Anthony Smiley ; but he concealed his emotion, excused himself gaily, joked a little about Jack Ketch, and hurried away.

The night passed by the condemned was spent principally in prayer, and though ever and anon a cold sweat came out upon brow and limbs, and he tightly grasped his throat to try to figure to himself what the agony would be ; yet the crime for which he was to suffer, had not been planned or plotted with malice,—it had been committed in hot blood, and bitterly repented of.

Anthony Smiley had listened to, and profited by the unremitting exertions of the pious char-

lain, he had made a full and free confession of all his crimes. He had done all that repentance and faith could do, and towards morning he slept ! yes, sounder than Gaspar, who, after a most luxurious repast, and a most protracted carouse, had retired to a downy bed ; where, however, conscience, in the shape of every horrible-night-mare which can haunt the sleep of guilt, tormented and terrified him.

He rose early, for on the morning of his brother's execution, even he could not sleep nor bear the lonely inaction of his bed-room.

He ordered a luxurious breakfast, and strolled out by the river to wile away the time. As he wandered along, in spite of himself, sick at heart, ghastly pale, and his knees shaking, resolved not to think of his brother's execution, yet thinking of nothing else, eight o'clock boomed on his ear ; the sound rendered by the echo of the waters, unusually clear, solemn and startling. Eight o'clock he knew was the hour at which culprits suffer, and for a moment,

Gaspar, in spite of the infidelity acquired by bad company, bad books, and a bad life, felt something of the influence of a mother's early lessons in infant piety,—tears, the first real tears he had shed for many years, rose to his eyes, as he recalled those days, when the brother, then dying an ignominious and torturing death on the scaffold, used to kneel with him by that mother's knee, and while the evening sun streamed on their pure brows, and in their little white garbs, spotless as themselves, their infant voices had joined in prayer, ere early slumber locked them in each other's arms. For one moment, Gaspar felt inclined to kneel, and pray again that forgotten, though long despised, and simple prayer : but the next, a change came over his heart—he remembered that by that time Anthony was no more, that he had died unknown, that all danger of detection and disgrace for himself was past. A feeling of hate and scorn of his brother, came back to his bad heart,—he whispered to himself,—“ According to what we call

revealed religion, I am more guilty than he, yet he dies on the scaffold, and I live honoured, loved, esteemed, in competence and comfort! another proof to me, what a mere old woman's legend keeps the world in awe." So thinking, with a firm step, a flushed cheek, and a heart at ease, Gaspar returned to his breakfast.

But while this was passing at Blackwall, quiet, resigned, collected, firm in faith, and earnest in repentance, Anthony Smiley had prepared to meet his doom. Marion had seen him late the night before, and had been carried away insensible, from that agonising parting; all night, workmen had been erecting the scaffold, and at peep of day, the vulgar crowds, greedy of horrors, began to arrive. The aristocratic party, of whom Lord Harry Sportington was one, *blasés* on most subjects, used-up and satiated with pleasure and amusement in every other shape, anticipated some little novelty from the comparatively novel excitement of "a hanging breakfast," and their dissipated faces were seen

betimes from beneath the dark hoods of their cabs, as they drove towards the appointed spot, which commanded a near view of the scaffold.

But time stole on, the crowd grew impatient, the hanging-breakfast party, sleepy, angry, and dull; and yet the melancholy procession appeared not; a murmur arose among the crowd, that a reprieve had been granted at the last moment, and when Lord Harry Sportington and his friends sent a tiger to ascertain the truth of a report, in their own brutal language, so deuced provoking, and so cursedly disappointing to them, they returned with the sad news that it was "too true;" that the sentence had been commuted to transportation for life, and that the condemned, who had shewn considerable firmness and nerve, while preparing for execution, when the chaplain (as cautiously as possible) conveyed to him the news of his reprieve, had fallen into a state of insensibility, in which he still continued.

The disappointed hanging breakfast party

cursed and swore—ate, drank, and smoked, and drove sulkily away; the crowd separated in no very good humour. But poor Anthony recovered to acknowledge, that till the rapture he felt on hearing of his reprieve, he had no idea himself, how dear life was to him, nor how terrible the doom he had nerved himself to undergo.

It was through the exertions and the interest of the excellent chaplain, who had found so much of real good in poor Anthony, that his sentence had been commuted. Through him, too, Anthony was sent to the least terrible of penal settlements; and Marion Moore was enabled to go out to the same place as an emigrant with her family, and the money that still remained to her, of the reward obtained by Anthony, for the restoration of little Noah.

As good conduct is speedily noticed and rewarded among the convicts, the chaplain had little doubt that Anthony, whose repentance he knew to be sincere, and his faith fervent and

firm, would obtain remission of his sentence ere long, and marry the woman, who, besides being his first love in prosperity, had proved herself his last friend in adversity.

But one result of his conviction that death was inevitable, Anthony Smiley now bitterly regretted ; he had made a full and free confession, not merely of all his sins, but of his birth, parentage, and education ; and though he had wished to shield, from motives of a sublime Christian forgiveness, the heartless brother who had been his ruin, yet, Marion, who was as anxious to punish as he was to pardon, had conveyed to the author of such biographies, the history of Gaspar Smiley, interwoven with that of his brother. No disgraceful detail which she knew, and she knew so many, had escaped the memory of this slighted, indignant, and now revengeful woman. The abduction of little Noah figured among other crimes which had come to her knowledge, and the whole formed a picture of calculating and cold-blooded villainy,

beside which the desperate deeds, and last unpremeditated, though fatal assault of Anthony Smiley, seemed light offences.

And on the very morning of Anthony's intended execution, this true, but to Gaspar blasting record, had gone forth to the world, with every minute detail of name, time, place and circumstance. The newspapers copied out the "History of Anthony Smiley," and when Gaspar, unconscious alike of his brother's reprieve and this horrible *exposé*, returned in the evening to London—as Byron, on the morning after the publication of Childe Harold, walked forth to find himself "famous," Gaspar Smiley went forth and found himself "infamous."

At first, he could make nothing of the cuts, the dead cuts, and the averted faces of former acquaintances, the shrugs, titters, and signals of people whom he only knew by sight; at length, the groans and hisses arose among a troop of the lower orders, who had been gradually collecting behind him; he heard his name,

and his brother's, pronounced with every opprobrious and insulting epithet : " Who forged a will ?" cried one **savage-looking, waistcoatless, shoeless wretch**,—" Who seduced his brother's intended ?" cried another,—**" Who stole a child ? Where's Janet Macauley ?"**—At this moment, one of the mob launched a stone at Major Smiley's head, while several others, prompt to imitate, pelted him with mud.

Terrified, exposed, sinking with shame, and ghastly with rage, Major Smiley hurried on towards the nearest hotel, there to take refuge, followed by this odious and fast increasing rabble, many of whom, in the vile missiles they used, and the odious names they called him, avenged themselves for their disappointment in not having seen his brother hanged. As, covered with vile filth, and followed by this horrible mob, Major Smiley made for the entrance of a fashionable hotel in Bond-street, an open carriage drove by ; an elegant and lovely woman looked eagerly out to see the cause of this com-

motion ; she turned pale, for she recognised the Major ; their eyes met, but he saw that she knew all, for she slowly, and with a shudder, turned away her head. Some fashionable men, old cronies of Gaspar's, lounged about the entrance of the hotel,—they stared at him, whispered each other, and laughed, as suddenly darting in at the door, he rushed passed them and escaped into a room, which he locked and bolted. The mob outside continued to assemble, and shout out its execration, until dispersed by the police. As for Gaspar Smiley's sufferings, they baffle all description ; he had never felt for others, but he now felt keenly for himself. He had guessed that all this must be owing to some revelations of Anthony's, on the scaffold : the room he had entered, contained a newspaper, and there he read the whole damning account of his life of cold-blooded sin. What to do he knew not, he longed to call out the men who had met him, but he felt that no one would meet him on an equality now ; he was blasted for ever,

never again could he meet one human eye that he had met before. With what shame and anguish he recalled Ada's shudder and averted gaze; the bullying, impudent titter of men who had once so courted him; the vile, vile insults of the rabble, who had followed him. No, no, never again will he endure an hour like the last. He pondered for some time, (a calculator still,) between suicide and escape to some distant land, where he was quite unknown. Had he had no resources, he would have chosen the former, but as his income was good, and he could realise a fair sum by the sale of his commission, he resolved on the latter. An epicure, a sensualist, and still in the bloom of health and prime of life, much admired by women, and popular among men, Gaspar Smiley, after a few hours' meditation, determined there were still pleasures worth living for, and he resolved to live. He rang for the master of the hotel—he told him he was the object of a base and vindictive conspiracy, which compelled him privately to escape from

England, to sell his commission, and to live abroad at least till the worst was blown over.

The hotel-keeper, cold and mercenary at first, grew polite when Gaspar Smiley told him the state of his affairs, and that a hundred pounds should be paid to Mr. C——, if he enabled him to reach Dover unmolested that night; and as Mr. C—— had a son, an attorney in tolerable repute, it was agreed that he should undertake the management of the Major's affairs, the sale of his commission, the disposal of East-house, and his other estates, and, in fact, become his regular man of business. All this was quietly and speedily settled. The Major escaped, unmolested, to Bourdeaux, where, however, he only staid long enough to receive the price of his commission, for he found there several English, the dread of whom kept him a prisoner.

With a large sum of ready money, and an income which on the continent made him a "milor," Major Smiley took up his abode wherever he found his countrymen were not,—

and as the English swarm in all the most desirable parts and most attractive cities, towns, and sea-ports, the Major was obliged to take refuge in villages and deserted chateaux.

With his tastes, his reminiscences, his conscience, and his still tormenting, unchecked passion for Ada, this was a dreary life, particularly as he spoke no language but his own, and dared hold no communion with any who spoke English.

At length he settled for a time in a city where there were few English, and those few unknown to him, but where good-living, beautiful women, a theatre and an opera, held out inducements to him to prolong his stay. Here, then, he took up his abode,—here, in a lavish indulgence of all the grosser pleasures of sense, he tried to forget the past, and shut out the future. Here he soon ranked high indeed as an epicure, a sensualist, and an *homme à bonnes fortunes*; and here he did pretty well, according to his own notions, until disease of body, the result of the self-indul-

gent life he now led, poisoned the only sources of gratification left to this miserable Sybarite,—namely, the senses. Vain of his fine person, Gaspar saw, with alarm and dismay, his hair grow grey and weakly, and drop off, his teeth become loose and discoloured, his eyes heavy and bleary, his cheeks dropsical, and his figure obese. At the same time a deep and settled melancholy (the result, probably, of a diseased liver and an evil conscience and vindictive passions, never quiet but when lulled by wine, or excess of some kind,) grew daily more deeply rooted in the wretch's mind. A clever English physician could probably have done much to cure both the mental and the physical ailments of this now most miserable man, but the ignorant quacks around him, by their injudicious treatment, confirmed all his diseases. Selfish discontent, a morbid remorse, (not a wholesome, Christian repentance,) a vague dread, indeed a haunting terror of the future, both temporal and eternal, and a thorough disgust of life, united to reduce

Gaspar Smiley to that state which is commonly called melancholy mad, and in this state he would doubtless have found ways and means of ridding himself of that consciousness which made a hell of h's own breast.

But he was a profitable patient; he had no friends to interfere about him, plenty of money to remunerate those who took charge of him; and so, when the attorney who managed his affairs, understood that his client was afflicted with incurable melancholy, he readily agreed to the foreign physician's proposal of taking him into his own private asylum, and providing entirely for him, for a certain sum,—namely, about a third of the unhappy man's actual income, but which to le Doctor Belzoni was positive wealth. Of the rest of Major Smiley's income, Mr. Burrow, his solicitor, undertook the stewardship, and was soon a great and successful speculator in railway shares, married to a beauty and a fortune, and driving about in a carriage and pair,

instead of trudging in the mud, with a blue bag on his arm.

It is wonderful how the diseased, whether of mind or body, are kept alive, when on their lives the living of others depends. While he was merely a chance patient, attended by several other doctors, all sharing in his profits, Doctor Belzoni (really clever in the treatment of the insane) took little interest in Gaspar Smiley, and he grew daily worse and worse; now, that on his life depended some four hundred a-year of income to his physician, nothing was neglected to keep him from destroying himself, (his chief and only object,) and indeed to stop the progress of any bodily disease which might rob the Doctor of his rich reward. The mental ailment of course he did not aim at curing,—and, indeed, the treatment Gaspar Smiley met with, in this foreign lunatic asylum, the hopelessness of escape in any way, and the indignant consciousness of his own degradation and Belzoni's imposition,

often aggravated what was nothing but incurable despondency, into frenzied and violent despair.

Oh, in the long, long nights, which Major Smiley spent on a hard pallet, strapped down, and his limbs confined by a straight-waistcoat, how bitterly did he bewail the selfish and calculating cruelty of his past life! Oh, could Janet look from her self-sought grave, and see him thus! could any of the women he had so heartlessly seduced from virtuous competence, to vice, want, and infamy, know how they were avenged! could ever Anthony see the curse he had brought upon himself by treachery, which had warped the will of his uncle, (for, but for his wealth, he knew he would be free to roam the world or die in a ditch,) he felt they would weep for him, wretch and curse as he had been to them; they would combine to free him from the horrible bondage and cruel treatment, he owed solely to the income which his own villainy had secured to him, and to the grasping cupidity of a resolute and artful wretch. But vain, vain,

all vain, his bitter tears, his groans, his howls, his bursts of passionate anguish and frenzied despair, they only confirmed the impression of his incurable insanity, and justified Belzoni in the harsh treatment he had a sort of cruel pleasure in enforcing!

Belzoni was a tall, powerful man, bald, with deep, cunning, black eyes, a very long nose, and a grinning, hyena-like mouth; an enormous eater, he was of the sallowest hue, saturnine, sarcastic, and, when roused, furiously passionate. His gaze, glittering through his spectacles, had an awful power over the most violent of the maniacs around him; and naturally cruel as his torturing experiments on cats, dogs, rabbits, &c. proclaimed him, he adopted no new systems of gentleness or kindness,—the chain, the lash, and the dashing of icy water on shaven heads, these, with the sparest diet, and incessant and most fatiguing exercise, formed what Belzoni called his “système.” Certainly none of his patients

recovered their reason, though many were restored to bodily health.

Gaspar Smiley (who not being actually insane, had great powers of reasoning, and frequently had by his cutting reproaches infuriated Belzoni) became the object of his especial aversion, and of his most cruel treatment, but Gaspar had not one creature to care for him, or to inquire into his fate; of every being who had loved him, he had made a victim! And while even Anthony the convict obtained, by excellent conduct, remission of his sentence, and married Marion Moore, and by husbanding the money she had saved, became proprietor of a farm, and grew in wealth and the esteem of all around him, and brought up his little cripple, and Marion's other children, in industry and piety; Gaspar drags on his wretched existence, either forgotten, or remembered with a shudder. Yes, Gaspar Smiley yet lives, the wretched inmate of a foreign mad-house,—and yet not mad,—ever on the

watch to destroy his dreadful life, but compelled to live, and grow daily stronger to suffer ! yes, compelled to live, because on his living depends in a great measure that of Dr. Belzoni.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AND now we must hasten back to London, and inquire what has become of our dear little Indian heiress, her three suitors, and the interesting Evergreens, with Devereux Spight, McPeevish, and Fitzplagiare,—Rose Pink, and her adorer, Stubbs.

After Inez left Ramsgate, poor Luckless, eager to be quite well, that he might hasten after her who was the joy of his heart and the delight of his eyes, threw off all the restraints of convalescence, caught cold, and brought on a severe relapse. When Inez was apprized of this catastrophe by a few lines from the woman at

whose house he lodged, her alarm and distress knew no bounds, and she implored Thalia Evergreen again to accompany her to Ramsgate; but Thalia had sacrificed her own prospects once to Inez's romantic passion, things were come to an important crisis now, between her and Grumbleby, and she could not be persuaded to accompany the heiress. As for Miss Evergreen, Fitzopal and herself had just fixed the day of their elopement, and settled all their plans, so that her leaving London was impossible. Inez, therefore, was obliged to content herself with Rose Pink as a companion, and with her, taking up her abode in a lodging near Luckless, she nursed him through a dangerous relapse, and brought him back to London with her. He returned to his own lodging, and Inez McAlpine, or, rather, Clementina Castleton, repaired with Rose Pink to Evergreen-house, to make preparations for a *soirée*, at which she meant to invite all her friends, and announce her approaching marriage to one not named in her father's will,

and the sacrifice of all her fortune except five hundred a-year.

Inez was not very much surprised to find Evergreen-house abandoned, and the sisters gone; she sent Rose to inquire of the other servants all particulars, and Rose returned, announcing they had been gone, Miss Evergreen three, and Miss Thalia two days.

"There must be some mistake, Rose," said Inez; "they would never go off in that way, without any notice, alone, unprotected!"

"No, no, mem, not alone," said Rose; "there is some mistake, but I fancy it's the gentlemen have made it. They're gone off to be married,—at least, Sally and Betsy says they knows they are by their ways, and their fidgettings and their finery. Lor, mem, to think of any gentlemen running away with two venerable elderly 'omen, as ugly as 'osses and as poor as rats, as if they were beautiful young heiresses fresh from a boarding-school."

"Nonsense, Rose, such remarks ill become

you ; go and search their rooms, they must have left some letter, some note, to explain such conduct !”

“ Lor, mem, nothing could explain their conduct since the Captain and the Squire resided here ; they were all as one as though they were bewitched, decking out their venerable heads, and rolling of their hantique eyes, and sighing for all the world like a broken bellows.”

“ Silence, Rose ! and go, as I told you, to the Miss Evergreens’ rooms, and see if they have left no notes on their toilets.”

“ Oh yes, mem ! I’ll go and see ! but they is, or rather was, such genuine old maids, they always kept their rooms, with all their finery and their cosmetics, locked up,—even their bonnets, Sally says, lest she should try them on, mem, and see how they looks on a becoming face.”

“ Once more, Rose, let me tell you, you are growing over pert and talkative, and if I have

to reprove you again, it will be in a more serious manner. Now go and do as I tell you."

Away went Rose, quite crest-fallen, muttering to herself,—“Lor, to be sure! how quiet missus takes their robbing her of two sweethearts. Why, if they'd cheated me of one, I'd have had their hies out. It's lucky for them they didn't set their caps at my Stubbs. But Stubbs knows what's what,—Stubbs knows a 'as-been from a four-year-old. I've had trouble enough to persuade him that I'm as young as I looks,—and no 'oman ought to be counted a day older than she looks! There's one register kept in her face, and one in the parish church, and if the first tells no tales, I'm sure t'other oughtn't to be let to. I'd tear mine out, if I could but get hold of it. These registers is the most ungal-lantest things as ever was! I wish 'em all burnt, that I do!” So muttering, Rose tripped up-stairs. Meanwhile, her mistress threw herself in an arm-chair, and yielded to an irrepressible

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! What a capital *dénouement* to my plot ! It must be as I suspected. Spight’s at the bottom of all this ! and I daresay he still hopes, that, having got my other two suitors off, I shall make a tolerable match for him with my poor five hundred a-year. But no, no ! if I make that sacrifice, (and that I am ready to make, my heart is proud to own,) I make it to a man whom I can love, and (better still, and more essential to a woman’s happiness, than even love,) one whom I can respect ! And that I can thee, thou beloved, thou devoted Luckless ! Did he not risk his life for me, when first he saved me ? How long did deep, deep love speak from his beautiful eyes, rather than from his lips, while he was held back by the consciousness of his own poverty, and fearful of entailing that dread curse, which he knows so well, on one whom he believes to be a penniless girl ! Oh, never till I knew him, did I appreciate the luxury of being rich ! Now that, when he expects in wedding me, to encounter all the evils

of a father's anger, the coldness of friends, the refusal, perhaps, of the living he would now so gladly accept; and, if so, a life of penury and toil,—now that I can tell him, that with me he secures competence, while for his sake, I gladly, proudly sacrifice wealth,—wealth which I concealed from others, lest it might purchase those attentions it was my ambition to win, and which I only regret, because I should have gloried to have thrown it at the feet of the man I love, and who loves me for myself alone! Ah, what joy it would have been, to have said, ‘Take all! thou whom I so cherish, so revere,—take all! and let *me* owe every blessing wealth can give, to thy dear bounty, making each delight thus doubly sweet.’ ”

“ Oh, mem,” said Rose, interrupting this soft soliloquy, and rushing in,—“you were quite right, both the ladies have left notes on their *twilights*, and here they are! So you see, mem, they’ve gone off, just like ‘eroines in a book.”

Her mistress took the notes, and read,—

“Forgive me, Inez, what may seem a rash step. Do not put off the *soirée* you had planned for the 16th instant, as by that time I shall return, the bride of Fitzopal! and before the assembled company, proclaim my clandestine marriage, and implore thy pardon! I have found, indeed, what my mournful muse invoked as the unattainable.

“Thy MELPOMENE EVERGREEN.”

“Exactly,” thought Inez,—“the hitherto unattainable,—namely, a husband! Implore my pardon! juvenile creature! I wonder she does not ask my blessing,—ha! ha! ha. Now for Thalia!”

“Inez, forgive me! I have stolen away the best of your beaux; but *he loved me*, and Inez would scorn with her wealth to buy a heart, her poor friend had contrived to win! The *soirée*, for which you sent out cards, must take place; I shall shine there as a new-made matron, but

a matron still, therefore a fit chaperon for thee ;
I shall come to thee, the bride of Grumbleby."

"Thy happy, but thy naughty

"THALIA."

"Capital !" said Inez,—“the party shall take place, and, for the bridegrooms, a *dénouement* which, I believe, they little expect. Oh, wonderful !”

“Beg pardon, mem,” said Rose, looking with impatience and curiosity ; “but ’tis so, arn’t it, then ?—they have heloped ?”

“They have, but will be here to-night at the party ; so it must still take place,—two brides will give it *éclat*.”

“Oh la, mem, what fun they’ll be, in wails and orange-blossoms, I’ll be bound !—virgin-white muslin and silver fringe. I hope, then, you’ll please to wear your new white satin and diamonds !”

“Well, Rose, perhaps I may oblige you ; as they’ve cut me out so completely, I feel rather inclined to return the compliment.”

"Please, mem, said Rose, pretending to look shy, "as Sir Noah and Lady Fathom's asked to the party, would you object to let Stubbs stay and help wait?"

"Oh, certainly.—Hark, a knock, Rose,—Mr. Luckless's. I am not visible to any one,—go, and say so."

As Rose hastened to obey, she rubbed her hands for glee, to think that Stubbs was coming. "He'll so like to see the fun,—he do so despise Captain Fitzopal. His poor uncle's no more, for I see his death on the paper. Matrimony is catching, and may be, seeing the brides and bridegrooms, may put it into his head to pop the question."

"It is his knock!" said Inez to herself; "how my heart beats! oh, what delight it is to love so well, that a knock at the door is answered by the heart itself!"

"Please, mem," said Rose, returning with a large and lovely bouquet,—“ Mr. Luckless have left this bouquet, and he hopes to have the plea-

sure and the honour of being here early this evening."

Inez took the bouquet, and felt a little note concealed among the flowers,—“You may go, Rose,” she said.

“So I thought,” muttered Rose, as she went; “but I saw the note too, my lady! Well, for onst in his life,” she added, looking at a sovereign in the palm of her hand, “he’s condescended to remember me; a man in love, who don’t remember the maid, forgets himself, and is very likely to be forgotten by the missus; for how can ladies remember who’s on their list, if their maids don’t remind ’em.”

When Inez was alone, with a trembling hand, she removed the note from its hiding-place, and with a blushing cheek, a tearful eye, and a palpitating heart, she read.—

“Inez!—forgive me, if I call you by that sweet name, which, in the lexicon of my heart, means virtue, beauty, truth, heavenly tenderness, and sublime constancy,—Inez, when shall

I see you ! Whatever clocks and watches may say, my sweet, sweet love, it is an age since I saw you ; I tried then to unburthen my full heart, but I find I have said nothing, and I have so much to say !—oh, Inez, dare I really hope that you will deign to share a country home with me ? I am not what I seem ; my father, as I told you, has disinherited me, because I refused to go into the church, when my restless and adventurous spirit shrunk from the holy duties of a pastor's life ; but now, love—true love has awakened all the pious feelings of my heart ! I long to devote to Heaven, a life, which now seems to me, one of such pure joy. Now, if I can obtain what I once refused, will you, Inez, angel of this dark and troublous world ! will you share and lighten every happy labour ? If you will not see me when I call, I implore you, write me a line before the party this evening. I feel so much as if it were all enchantment, fairy-land, that will fade away like a heavenly

dream ! but a line from your dear hand will confirm, 'the sober certainty of waking bliss.'

"Your adoring,

"LUCKLESS."

"Oh, wild delight !" cried the enthusiastic Inez, pressing the letter to her lips ; "oh, triumph such as heiresses have seldom known ! he loves me ! woos me ! for myself alone ! My life's devotion shall repay his love." So saying, Inez seized a pen and wrote :—

"Be happy ; you have made me so ; let this assurance suffice till this evening, when, with delighted ear, I will listen while you tell me all ; and you shall hear some happy tidings, unexpected, but I believe most welcome, from your own

"INEZ."

"Send this note directly to Mr. Luckless, Rose," said Inez, when her maid answered the summons of the bell.

Rose took the note, and left the room, inwardly exclaiming,—“ Well, poor gals must look after the ready money, and heiresses can afford to throw themselves away! now, I’m not like missus! I couldn’t love a poor man—for the life of me I couldn’t. There’s something to my mind so mean, so low, so degrading in poverty, I can’t abide it! Why, even Stubbs, my first love, as I may say, has his ups and downs in my heart, according to circumstances; his circumstances I mean. Heigh ho! he’s only too dear to me now! I hope he’ll act honourable, and propose at once!”

“ He will not love me the less,” mused Inez, “ when he knows my secret; or, if he did, I should wish myself the poor dependent creature he believes me now. Rose!” she cried; “ quick! time is hasting on, and we are idling sadly. Are the rooms prepared? is everything ready? You know there will be Captain and Mrs. Fitzopal, Mr. and Mrs. Grumbleby, Sir Noah and Lady Fathom, Messrs. Spight, McPeevish, and Fitz-

plagiare, and Mr. Wildair Revel, Lady Fathom's brother, if he is come to light at last, and Mr. Luckless."

"Lor, yes, mem, and Stubbs to help wait."

"Come now to my toilette, Rose, and do your best," said Inez.

"She'll be hard to please to-night!" thought Rose; and even I, myself, shan't be dressed in a jiffy."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE evening of our heiress's party came, and found Sir Noah Fathom busy at his toilet, with Stubbs in close attendance. Stubbs was engaged, curling the hair, or rather the wig, which had been neglected in that respect, ever since the memorable day at Brighton, when Sir Noah in papillotes astonished the eyes of Devereux Spight.

Sir Noah sate, looking complacently at himself in the glass, while Stubbs carefully papered and pinched his curls. "I think, Stubbs," he said, rubbing his hands as he saw the straight

bristles of the wig assume a most decided crispness,—“I think these curls will be a very agreeable surprise to your lady. Don't you think so, Stubbs?”

“I suppose they will, sir,” said Stubbs, dejectedly. “I know,” he inwardly added, they're a very disagreeable surprise to me.”

“What's the matter, Stubbs?” said Sir Noah, kindly; “speak out, man; you seem to have something in your mind.”

“Well, sir, I has, and there's the truth,” said Stubbs, bursting into tears, and brandishing the comb and curling-tongs in his excitement, —“I has, Sir Noah, something in my heart, and it must out. But don't think it bold in me, Sir Noah, but it do seem hard to me, when I watches all these changes in you, measter, to think, that when woman was the fust to tempt man to eat o' the tree o' knowledge, and when having through her parvarse curiosity brought a cuss upon the whole married race of Hadam, and when fallen man's only comfort is in the

cultivation of that tree she fust give him a taste for, she snatches away the very fruit she offered afore, and gives him funguses and rubbish instead ; for, oh, sir, what else is the vain pleasures of this here metrotolles of vice, and all the idle wanities for which, to please my lady, you've gived up all your larning?"

"Not so! not so! my poor Stubbs; you have a wrong notion of all this; now hear my version of the same tale: When, through woman's curiosity and man's fond weakness, they were turned out of Paradise, God taught them to cling for ever to each other; hand-in-hand to tread the thorny waste, side by side to weep and toil and pray! And of all the ineffable joys of Eden, Stubbs, they've retained but one.—not Science, Knowledge, or even the calm delights of contemplation,—no! that one, Stubbs, was their wedded tenderness, their fond companionship, and mutual trust and love. Too long did I lose sight of this, my good Stubbs; but now I'm all for wedded love, and pure joys!

Too long was I guilty of a species of mental bigamy,—your lady's husband, and yet wedded to science; but I have seen my error, and its dangers, and now I'm all for conjugal affection! So now, Stubbs, cheer up! Give me the new embroidered waistcoat you got for me, *sub rosa*. Oh, how she'll like it! sweet Ada! Now my Herculanæum brooch!" As Sir Noah looked at it, he began to muse—"Now that," he murmured, "was the gradual formation of—let me see, I wonder if this beautiful specimen——"

"Oh, sir! oh, measter!" cried Stubbs, joyfully, now you speak like yourself!"

"Like myself, Stubbs! you alarm me! I forgot," he said, putting it aside,—“I wouldn't be like myself for the world! Now my mulberry coat, with silver buttons. I wish fashion would devise something lighter and gayer for man's dress, than these puritan coats of ours; however, my waistcoat's elegant, isn't it, Stubbs?"

"Oh yes, sir!" groaned Stubbs. "You don't look the leastest bit like your venerable self!"

“So much the better; your lady has no taste for the venerable. Now give me some perfume. Ah, I hear your lady, my sweet Ada! and our cherub boy! Stop,” he added, turning to the glass, “do I look my best?” As he spoke, Sir Noah intently examined the fit of his waistcoat.

“Alas!” murmured Stubbs, “it’s all over with him. “Oh, ooman! ooman! you’re at the bottom of every wanity and wexation going. And he, as he stands there, afore that wery glass, sinked down into a common swell, once ris to be a giant o’ larning, the grand leader o’ anticks, the Wellington o’ intelleck, and the great promoter of the confusion of knowledge!”

“My dear Noah!” said the silver voice of Lady Fathom, as she knocked at the door, “can I come in? I’m not alone; here’s a gentleman of great importance wants to pay his respects to you.”

As she spoke, a little, fat, rosy hand, with outspread fingers, appeared through the half-open

door, and a dear little voice said,—“Noee wants its own pap-pa.”

“Oh, come in, my treasures!” said Sir Noah, tears of happiness dimming his spectacles; and Ada, beautifully dressed for the party, her boy in her arms, and a rose-bud in her hand, entered, and started with an air of pleased surprise, as she saw Sir Noah.

“Is that my Noah?” she cried, running up to him, while little Noah, caught, as children always are, by glitter, stroked the gold embroidery of his waistcoat, and began to catch at the silver buttons of his coat.

“Is that, indeed, my own antediluvian love! pet book-worm! my own Noah?” asked Lady Fathom, turning him about, and admiring him, while Sir Noah chuckled with joy, and shewed himself off. “Is that my Noah?”

“Ah,” groaned Stubbs, *sotto voce*, “you may well ask that, my lady.”

“Admirable indeed!” said Ada. “Come, the same genius which made you the king of the ante-

diluvian world, will now make you that of the fashionable one !”

Sir Noah, in a fit of rapture and gratified affection, asked,—“ Then you think I shall do, Ada ?”

“ Do !” replied Ada, kissing his cheek,—“ I only hope you’ll not make me jealous !”

“ Not if I can help it, love,” said Sir Noah, with a simplicity almost affecting ; “ I know the pangs of jealousy too well.”

“ Hush ! hush !” cried Lady Fathom, putting her hand on his lips ; “ a forbidden subject !” She places the rose-bud in his button-hole—
“ Now kiss papa, Noee dear ! It is time to go.”

“ Let’s see, love, where are we going ?” asked Sir Noah.

“ Oh fie ! why you haven’t forgotten that already ?—Going to a *soirée* given by Miss Castleton (that was), the great Indian heiress, of whom my poor brother Wildair might have

had a chance, but with whom, it seems, Captain Fitzopel has eloped. You remember, she came to London, to select one of three suitors, appointed by her father's will: Adolphus, Wildair, and Grumbleby. The invitation comes as from Miss Castleton, but I presume she has invited all concerned, to announce her marriage with my cousin Adolphus. She enclosed to me an invitation for Wildair.—Ah, I wish he were here! or that I knew anything certain about him, poor fellow! But I am so blest in the best of husbands and the loveliest of children, that I cannot rail at Fate. Hush! dearest, our boy has fallen asleep in my arms. Come, we will very gently consign him to his nurse, (I have no fears now that that villain Smiley has fled the country,) and then we will order the carriage. Come with me to the nursery.”

“I come,” whispered Sir Noah, afraid of awaking his child. “I declare I begin to like party-going.” He took a last look at himself,

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and then gazing fondly at Ada, and pointing to the glass, said, "Look, love, we are not so ill matched, after all!"

"Ill matched!" said Ada, tears rising to her beautiful eyes; "the best matched, happiest pair in London. Come, love; come!"

As they went away, lovingly arm-in-arm, a groan issued from the very heart of Stubbs, who had been busy, arranging the room.

"She's right! My lady's right," he said; they're well matched now! now that he's shrunk into a mere swell, as I said afore. Well, what's the odds, so he's happy? And surely the man shouldn't be wiser than the master! (Goes to the glass.) How do I look, I wonder? Curls wouldn't misbecome me!" (He gives his hair a turn with the tongs.) "I can't stay here, to witness this falling-off in measter! and so, as I *am* uncle's hair, and a man of property now, this very night I'll pop the question, and in a few days convert Rose

Pink into Mrs. Stubbs. Rose is a sharp gal, and when once she's sworn to love, honour, and *obey*, she *shall* keep pace with the march of hintelleck, or I'll know the reason why."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE elegant and spacious rooms at Evergreen-house, on which our wealthy and charming heiress had spent so much taste and money, were brilliantly lighted and beautifully decorated for the reception of her guests. The lovely hostess, hard to please at her toilette that night, (as Rose had prophesied she would be,) had not yet made her appearance; but Devereux Spight, McPeevish, and Fitzplagiare, were assembled *à l'anglaise*, and standing on the rug with their backs to a fire-place full of geraniums and orange-trees.

“ My dear Spight,” said McPeevish, “ where have you been this age, and what is the matter with you? You look pale—ill—you tremble; surely you are afraid of the Captain’s return, after the hoax you have played off upon him?”

“ Pshaw!” said Spight, “ I never was afraid of man or devil; but the fact is, the verdict’s against me. Damages a thousand pounds, and costs. The Hornet’s done up! and because, for precaution’s sake, I’ve got a passport for Boulogne, a writ of *capias* is out against me. It’s almost madness, my being here to-night; but you two, may perhaps help me to escape, if needful, and cover my retreat. The fact is, I cannot give up the pleasure of beholding the Captain’s dismay, and Grumbleby’s fury, at the *dénouement*, by which they will find that instead of Clementina Castleton, they have married penniless old maids. Then, too, if I could get a few minutes’ *tête-à-tête* with Clementina, after the introduction of Mrs. Fitzopal, I think I might work on her womanly pique, so as to

make her either elope with me, or pay the damages and costs; and if not, I have a cab at the back-door, ready to wheel me off to the Tower-stairs, whence a packet for Boulogne starts to-night; so I shall soon be out of reach of the Captain's pop-gun, and Grumbleby's fist!"

"By-the-bye," said McPeevish, "I don't feel very easy, now you mention them,—for I, too, had a share in this hoax. I think, as it is dark, I shall step out on the balcony, and sit down among the shrubs, till I see how matters turn out."

"I'll bear you company, so as to be ready to run like the 'moon-eyed herald of alarm!' as I said in my 'Pleasures of Pain;' or, as Campbell says——Ha! I hear wheels,—I shall take a seat behind the folding-door!"

He had scarcely done so, when Luckless, elegantly dressed, entered.—"Not down yet?" he said, looking at his watch; "am I, then, so very early? Alas! love's watch always gains; I thought I had compelled myself to wait the

appointed time !" So saying, he sauntered into the inner room, just as Sir Noah and Lady Fathom were announced.

"What an odd party !" said Lady Fathom ; "no one to receive one. Oh, I remember, the Evergreens are 'blues;' I daresay Miss Castleton is, too; 'blues' never know how to do anything properly !"

"My love, I am not out of order, I hope" said Sir Noah, looking in a glass,— "am I, love ?"

"Oh, no, in the finest order possible !" said Lady Fathom, settling his cravat ; "as I hope you always will be in future, love ;" she added, archly.

"Whose house is this, Ada ?" asked Sir Noah,— "I've quite forgotten."

"The Misses Evergreen ; it's called Evergreen-house ; and the late Miss Castleton the heiress lived here, and gives this party, as I understand, to proclaim her marriage with my cousin, Adolphus Fitzopal. Now, do come and

look at the exquisite Flora, half hidden by these beautiful plants. I declare, out of the way as the situation is, the rooms are most enchanting; I never saw anything so tasteful and so perfect. Just come into that little boudoir, and look at that Flora, I think it must be one of Bailey's !"

As Sir Noah and Lady Fathom walked into the boudoir, Captain and Mrs. Fitzopal (late Miss Evergreen,) entered the front room. The bride was arrayed in a most voluminous dress of white lace; an enormous crinolin, or horsehair petticoat, lent its aid, to give to a dress with four skirts, a most preposterous circumference; all these skirts were fringed with silver, and looped up with orange-flowers and white favours; a huge Norma wreath, made of orange-blossoms, reared itself half a foot above her brow, and a veil half shaded her blushes and her charms.

Fitzopal looked pale, angry, annoyed, and carelessly dressed. "I hope," he said to himself, "the confounded dénouement is at hand, and

that she's going publicly to proclaim her marriage, and put me in possession of the property I've bought so very, very dear !”

As he walked to the upper end of the room, with his mincing, affected, and gorgeous bride, Mr. and Mrs. Grumbleby were ushered in ; the former, in ultra bridegroom attire, with a huge silver favour in his button-hole, and radiant with triumph and joy ; the latter, arrayed much like her sister, only instead of the Norma wreath and classic braids, orange-blossoms hung among her ringlets as low as her shoulders.

While Mr. and Mrs. Grumbleby were announced at one door, at the other, and by her own especial command, in order to make the effect more complete, a footman in a stentorian voice announced “ Miss Castleton !” and Miss Castleton, lovely as a houri, her black eyes bright with triumph, and yet soft with love, delicately flushed, smiling most sweetly, and arrayed in white satin, and one of the finest sets of diamonds in England, entered the room with

graceful ease, bowing as she did so with a queen-like dignity to the guests, who hurried forward, with ludicrous and varied expressions of surprise, dismay, confusion, and alarm.

Yes, all pressed forward except Luckless, who, coming from the inner room just as his affianced Inez was announced as Miss Castleton, stood at some distance, pale and agitated, but perfectly still, and his arms folded on his breast.

The first to speak was Lady Fathom, who coming forward with well-bred ease, offered her hand, and said,—“I rejoice to make your acquaintance, Miss Castleton, as does Sir Noah Fathom; I only wish my brother, Mr. Wildair Revel, could have accepted your kind invitation; but—” She looked up and perceived Luckless, then turning pale, and rushing forward, she cried,—“But what do I see! himself! Wildair! Dear, dear Wildair! Come forward, my long-lost brother! Come!”

“No, Ada, no,” said Wildair, (for the reader of course has always detected Wildair Revel

beneath the flimsy disguise of Luckless,) "not till I know whether Wildair Revel is as welcome here, as poor Luckless had the happiness of believing himself."

"I am indeed amazed," said Miss Castleton, "but most delighted too. Thank Heaven, then, my affections have been given where duty, and obedience to my father's will ordained they should be! Welcome, then, Mr. Wildair Revel! thrice welcome to her you won as poor Luckless! if Clementina Castleton is indeed as dear to you, as was your poor, forlorn, dependent Inez McAlpine!"

Tears stood in the eyes of the lovers, nor in theirs alone, as their hands met.

"I am bewildered," said poor Sir Noah, sobbing. "The formation of earth out of chaos would puzzle me less; but I see there's true love at the bottom, and that is always so touching."

"Chaos indeed, Sir Noah," said Miss Castleton, placing her hand in his; "but I will elucidate the mystery."

“ Damnation, madam !” at length burst forth Captain Fitzopal, to his bride, as, ghastly pale, and choking with passion, he clutched her arm. What means all this ! Have you presumed to impose upon me ? Were you not Miss Castleton, the heiress ? Speak ! who and what are you ?”

“ Your lawful wife, Adolphus ! your loving, loved, and lawful wife,—perhaps the future mother of your future babe !”

“ And who the devil are you, madam ?” shouted Grumbleby to his partner.

“ What you surely always thought, Gregory, —once poor Thalia Evergreen, and now your happy, happy bride.”

“ Were you a party, madam, to any plot to take me in, and make me believe you were the heiress ?” asked Grumbleby, *sotto voce* of Thalia, while the company crowded round Mrs. Fitzopal, who pretended to swoon at her bridegroom’s feet.

“ Not I, indeed, my Gregory !” replied Thalia ; I thought you loved me for myself alone. I

knew no interested motive could actuate your noble heart ! nothing but true devotion prompt your vows ! Was I not right ? speak, my husband !”

“ It can’t be undone,” thought Grumbleby, “ so I’d better keep my own counsel ; else, as Thalia’s a true woman, I shall never hear the end of it. And she is a fine creature ! and does adore me ; and I’ve enough for both—not to mention a family. Fathom shan’t have a joke against me ! and I’ll defeat McPeevish’s end, and Spight’s too, by seeming to be charmed with my bargain.—You were right, my lovely bride,” said Grumbleby aloud, embracing Thalia —“ I married for love, and for love alone, and am more than content.”

McPeevish, on hearing this, ventured forth and mixed with the company.

“ And I,” said Captain Fitzopal, still pale with passion, and glancing fury at his bride, whom Thalia and Miss Castleton were supporting, and who slowly opened her eyes on Fitzopal, to close

them again, as she met his looks of vengeance, —“ I am the victim of an accursed and base conspiracy. I have been deceived—tricked—ruined !”

“ Yes,” said Lady Fathom, with ineffable scorn, “ but only by your own cupidity and falsehood.”

“ True, sir,” cried Sir Noah, purpling and drawing near ; “ let me ask you, how you and that villain Smiley ——”

“ Leave him to me, Sir Noah,” laughed, with a light, mocking laugh, Lady Fathom, —“ to me, to his conscience, and *his wife*. The evil he meditated has fallen on his own head, and his base accomplice is now an exile, and a byeword. He, too, is amply punished. Look at him ! and that is a bridegroom just returned from Gretna ! ha ! ha ! ha !”

“ I’ll shame her yet !” said Fitzopai, beside himself with rage, as Lady Fathom’s laugh was echoed by all around. “ The marriage cannot

be valid. It was contracted under false pretences."

"Oh shame! shame! Adolphus," cried Mrs. Fitzopal, reviving, and hiding her face in her sister's bosom. "After all your vows, all your passion and my tenderness, would you repudiate your bride?"

"I shall be the laughingstock of 'ours,' groaned the Captain, "the standing joke of the mess,—and this I owe to ——"

"To your own insolence, extravagance, avarice, and Spight!" cried a voice from the inner room, and for one moment, Devereux Spight, who had been watching the whole *dénouement* from behind the folding-doors, shewed himself to the enraged Captain and astonished company, and then, darting out at the back drawing-room door, sped down stairs, rushed across the garden, threw himself into the cab he had in waiting, and was soon beyond pursuit.

At his apparition, his voice, and his enraging words, Captain Fitzopal had attempted, with an

oath, to dart after him, but beth his bride and her sister, aided by McPeevish and Fitzplagiare, held him back.

“Stop, Captain Fitzopal !” said the lovely Clementina, coming gracefully forward, and speaking in a voice of soft persuasion, as she laid her gentle hand on the Captain’s struggling one. “Stop, I beg ! and for once listen to good advice !—Leave the regiment, where ceaseless and biting ridicule of course awaits you ! behave with manly kindness, to her you have most certainly wedded ; if from interested motives, however mistaken, so much the more ridiculous your disappointment, and the less to be pitied is your fate ; she is yours—yours in the sight of God and man, and you are hers. If I blame her for her deception, I blame you still more for the motives which enabled her to practise it. It seems, however, that you are a ruined man, and she a penniless woman ; therefore I have resolved to settle on her (now that I find my own fortune secured by my marriage,) a handsome

annuity, to be paid regularly, as long as you live happily together !” So saying, Clementina joined the hands of Captain and Mrs. Fitzopal, the latter became all radiant with joy and triumph, the former shrunk into a corner, sullen and abashed.

“ Sir,” said McPeevish, aside to Grumbleby, whom he had for some time watched, as he sat sporting tenderly with his fond and playful bride,—“ you may remember you promised me a handsome reward, if you succeeded in securing the lady.”

“ I did so,” said Grumbleby, apparently in good humour, and in earnest ; “ call upon me to-morrow morning, my good fellow, and I will perform my promise—with a horsewhip !” he added, aside.

“ Dear sir, I will not fail to do so !” said McPeevish, delighted, as he moved away.

“ And may Wildair Revel,” asked, in a deep, rich voice, our old friend Luckless,—“ May Wildair Revel publicly, and before this goodly

company, claim the fair hand he privately won as the wretched Luckless?"

"He may indeed!" replied the sweet Clementina Castleton, placing her frank hand in his. "For once the father's and the daughter's will can be reconciled—they are indeed one!"

"Oh, Inez!" said Luckless, pressing her hand to his heart,—“sweet Inez! for to me you will be Inez still; my life's devotion shall repay this heavenly confidence, this true, true love!"

"Right my boy! right!" said Sir Noah,—“be all the world to each other; that is the grand secret of happiness in wedded life—have no other *confidante*, no other engrossing pursuit; be wedded only to the wife of your bosom; this devotion in you will awaken a similar one in her; and you will be, what Lady Fathom and myself now are!"

"Domestic joy!" cried Fitzplagiare, "thou only bliss of Paradise that hath outlived the fall,

as I said in my little poem, the ‘Pleasures of Pain.’”

“That,” said Lady Fathom, “is very likewhat a true poet has said, and what all true hearts have felt ; I have here,” she added, looking with a little arch triumph at Fitzopal and Grumbleby, and then playfully at the company, “at least two pairs of wedded, and one of affianced lovers.”

“My lady,” said Stubbs, who, with Rose Pink, had been pretending to assist in handing tea and coffee, but in reality, listening to every word,—“My lady, forgive my freedom, you take an interest in Rose Pink, and will be glad to hear of her promotion to be my bride, now I’m huncle’s hair ; so there are two pairs of wedded, and two of affianced lovers, if you please, my lady ; humble as we may be, compared with our betters, we’ve hearts too, and therefore I know you’ll include us in your good wishes. Matrimony, my lady, is a open burrow, and every man has a wote, and a right to freedom of election !”

“Exactly !” said Miss Castleton, “and in

electing my maid, Rose Pink, you will find, my good Stubbs, you have not chosen a *silent member* !”

“Why sure, madam,” said Rose, “a woman must use the only lawful weapon in her power, and to my mind, every woman should be speaker in her own house of parliament ; but with your leave, my dear, kind mistress, I have agreed to marry Mr. Stubbs, and settle him afterwards.”

“And I’m content with that,” said Stubbs ; “the more palaver before election, the less performance after ! witness—but I beg pardon, I’m too bold.”

“Exactly,” said Lady Fathom, “You have said all it imports you to say, or Rose to hear, and may you, neither of you, ever repent the sayings, or wish those words recalled ! For myself, from the experience of three years, I say to all newly wedded, and all affianced couples, —Since you have united your fates, be it your study to unite your hearts ! Mr. Fitzplagiare, a professed poet, has given you a little extract

from his 'Pleasures of Pain,' I will conclude my homily, as the only matron of any experience present, with an impromptu, suggested by the occasion."

Husbands ! scorn not to take some pains to keep
The hearts you all have taken much to win !
And wives ! remember what you sow you reap,
And small imprudences may lead to sin !
A moral mildew comes from Gallia's shore,
Let satire wake ! that mildew were no more !
The married woman's most inveterate foe
Is her cavalier, cecisbeo, or beau ;
Her husband in himself alone should blend,
The confidant, the lover, and the friend.
To him alone devote your spotless lives,
And ponder well this " Warning," oh ye " Wives !"

THE END.





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